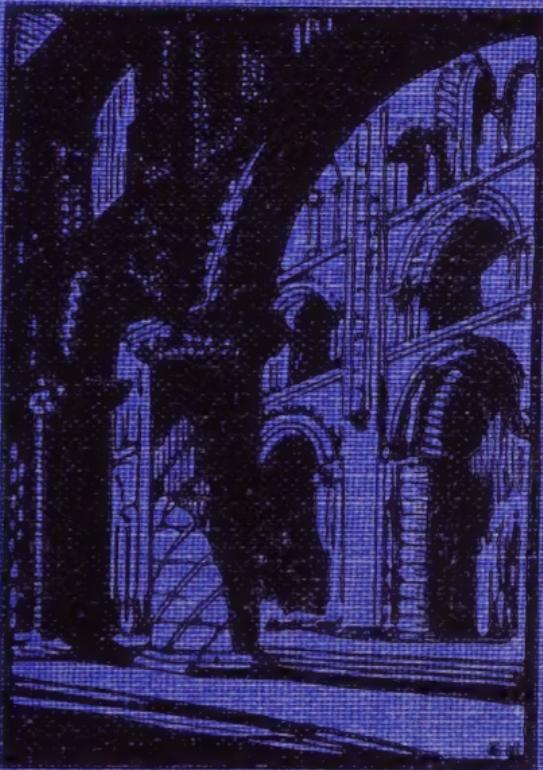


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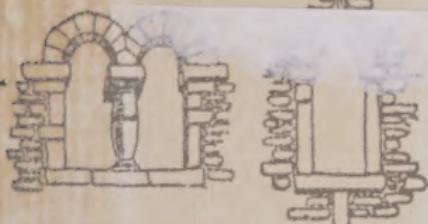
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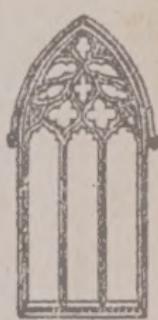
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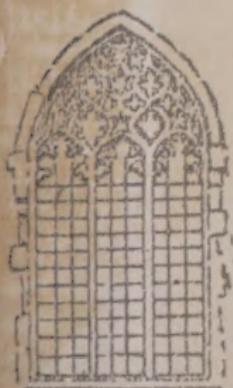
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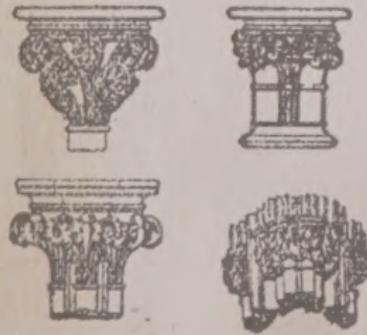


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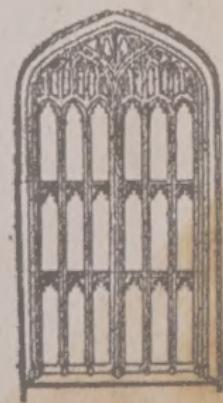


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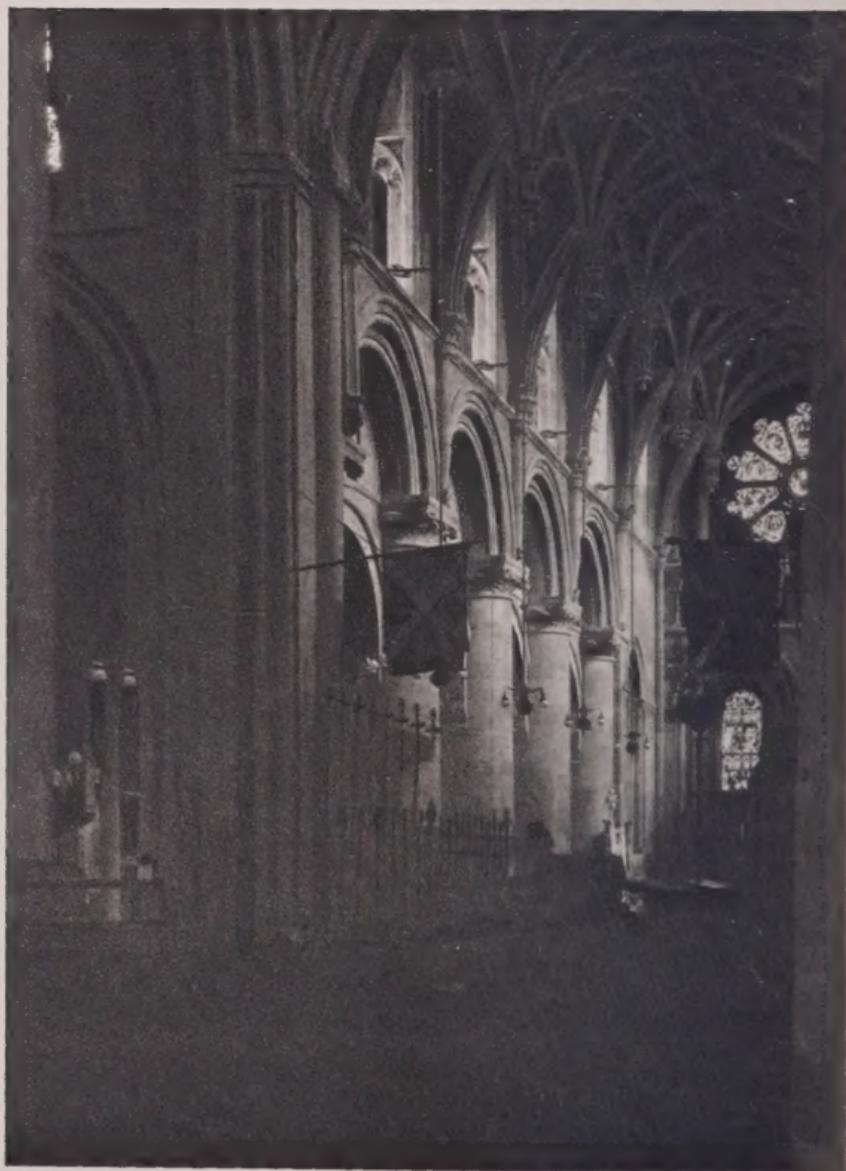
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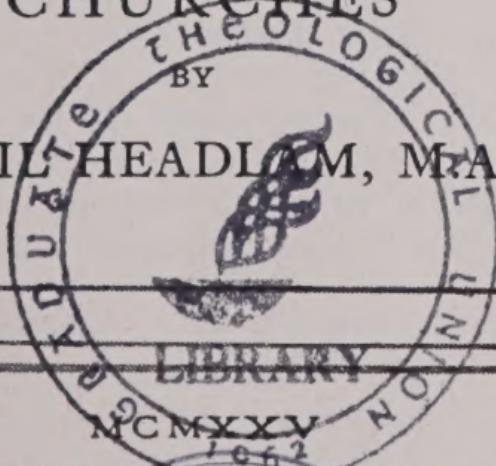
CHRISTCHURCH CATHEDRAL, OXFORD.

The choir from the nave showing the magnificent vaulted roof
above the Norman arcade.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THIS is one of a series of volumes devoted to cathedrals, abbeys and famous churches. They are planned to be small enough for the pocket and yet sufficiently large to give adequate scope for illustration and a very readable size of type.

The aim which I have set before me in these books is the presentation, as far as possible, of *the personal aspects of the great buildings*. I have encouraged the authors to write as fully as space permits of the men who raised the great structures and of those whose energy and enterprise brought about the successive remodellings and reconstructions which have left to the present age these inspiring works of what I do not hesitate to call the noblest and most all-embracing forms of art. The men and women whose monuments or unmarked burial-places are in the cathedrals have, as far as possible, been presented as human beings. While the architecture is fully described, the authors have been urged not to try the patience of those to whom architectural terminology conveys comparatively little. It is my hope, therefore, that the books will stimulate the interest of many who have in the past found the great churches of England a ponderous and uninspiring subject.

In regard to the illustrations I have made a determined effort to avoid the stereotyped points of view,

and to present some of the less familiar aspects of the structures. Last autumn I visited the places concerned for the purposes of this book and took, with two exceptions, the photographs which appear in these pages.

The pictorial summary of English, Romanesque and Gothic architecture inside the front cover, and the series of effigies given on the back endpaper, are designed to be useful as reminders of the dates of the architectural periods and of armour and the costume of women in the Middle Ages.

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OXFORD

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OXFORD AND NEIGHBOURING CHURCHES

CHAPTER I

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

History—Oseney Abbey

The majority of those who visit Oxford do not, perhaps, regard that famous city as first and foremost a cathedral town. Those who do will be more particularly surprised at the curious obscurity in which the entrance to the cathedral is shrouded, and the comparative insignificance of the building itself so far as outward show is concerned. Remembering the commanding positions of many great cathedrals, strongholds like Lincoln or Durham, "half house of God, half castle 'against the Scot,'" built both for the service of God and for resistance to the invader, and used as fortresses as well as houses of prayer, they will marvel at the modest stature and humble site of so famous a church in a town so famous. In this city of spires the plain and lowly spire of the smallest cathedral in England makes no claim to predominance. It is completely overshadowed by the great bell tower of "Cardinal's College." The entrance to the cathedral church is through a double archway in a corner of the magnificent expanse of Tom Quad, within the precincts of the College of Christ Church. How these things came

12 The Legend of St. Frideswide

to pass will fully appear from the following history of the building and its surroundings. But viewed from the eastern end, from Merton Meadows by the river, or beheld through the leafy avenue of trees which line the stately Broad Walk, the Cathedral Church of Christ in Oxford discards its air of seclusion. Set upon the first rising ground above the level water-meadows that skirt the river channel, the cathedral which has succeeded to the church of St. Frideswide is then seen to be by no means lacking in dignity or architectural effectiveness. And the choice of its site at once becomes intelligible if we throw ourselves back in imagination to the days before this great and famous city had come into being, the days when the waters of Isis flowed in solitude through uncultivated meads and untamed woodland.

For here a bank of gravel, running up from what is now Christ Church Meadow, offered to one approaching by water the first dry site suitable for a building. And here it was that, according to the legend, Didan, a local under-king, founded somewhere about the beginning of the VIIIth century a nunnery for his saintly daughter, Frideswide—Frideswitha, the Bond of Peace. That legend in its broad outline and after due allowance is made for the embroidery of detail elaborated by the fond imagination of devoted chroniclers, there is no reason to regard with scepticism.

THE LEGEND OF ST. FRIDESWIDE

"About the year of our Lord 727," writes Anthony Wood, in prose that it were almost a profanation to

attempt to modernise or curtail, “there lived in the city of Oxford a Prince named Didan, one of incomparable honesty and vertues, who, by his wife Safrida, had an only daughter called Frideswide, born at this place and by her parents brought up in all manner of honest and liberall breeding befitting her descent.” At an early age she was seen to be “religiously addicted, and even from her infancy to embrace celestiall before terrestrial enjoyments. She learned her lessons; and her fastings were frequent; her prayers and offerings, both day and night, continually to God.”

Her father attempted to persuade her to marry, but “she would as often find denials, protesting seriously that she would live a single life and spend her dayes to the utmost as a votaresse to God.” Didan therefore offered to settle her in a nunnery. “But she (utterly disliking that motion that she should, being a princesse, be subject to her inferiours)” preferred to abide in her father’s house, and urged him to spend part of his great possessions upon “some religious fabrick wherein she and her spirituall sisters (votaresses also) might spend their dayes in prayers. . . . Wherefore the good old man built a Church within the præcincts of the city of Oxon, dedicating it to the honour of the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary and All Saints.”

Here Frideswide, having taken the veil, induced twelve other virgins of noble birth to follow her example, and to submit themselves to her as their abbess. After her father’s death, the fame of her beauty and virtue inspired a “young spritely prince, named Algar, King of Leycester, to become her adorer in way of marriage.” He pressed his suit

ardently, but Frideswide "triumphed soe highly in her virginity" that she would have none of him. Algar, in despair, determined to have recourse to violence, and despatched emissaries to bring her away by force. But as they approached the walls of the nunnery, in answer to the prayers of Frideswide, they were "miraculously struck blind, and like mad men ran yelling about the City." The sight of "those simple and impertinent people" was restored upon the intercession of St. Frideswide. But Algar, when he heard what had occurred, "rose up in a thundering rage," and marched in force upon Oxford, intending to wreak his vengeance upon Frideswide. But she, being warned of his coming by an angel, fled down to the river-side, where, as the angel had foretold to her, she found a boat, "and in it the appearance of a yong man with a beautiful countenance and clothed in white: who, mitigating their feare with pleasant speech, placed them in the boat, in which, the space of one hour, shee and her sisters arrived neare the town called Benton." This place is variously interpreted as Bampton or Abingdon. Here, in the depths of a vast and dismal wood, they took shelter in a cattle-shed. "Which place being quickly overgrown with ivy and other sprouts, they continued therein a long time, being in fasting and prayers." In the meantime Algar had arrived at Oxford, and, finding the bird flown, was about to destroy the city, when he also was "miraculously deprived of his sight, and all his men thereupon with horrour fled." This incident gave rise to a superstition that it was not safe for any king to enter Oxford for fear the same fate should befall him.

By the intercession of the nuns, Frideswide was presently induced to return to Oxford. On her way she stopped at Binsey, where she founded an oratory, and "by her imprecations caused a spring to break forth, purposely to satisfie the thirst of the sisters who had come from Oxford to greet her." This spring, known by the name of St. Margaret's Well, later became a popular place of resort, its healing properties being held in high repute.

Frideswide is said to have returned to Oxford mounted on a milk-white ox, betokening innocence. As she rode along the streets she urged on her steed, addressing it thus: *Bos perge*, or Ox forth. "And hence they undiscreetly say that our city was from thence called Oxforth."

Frideswide, before she died, directed that her body should be buried in the church. "At which time there sprung up such a sweet odor from that place that the whole aire about the city in a small time (to the admiration of all) was replenished with it." Thereafter, the Feast of St. Frideswide (19th October) was regularly "observed with great jollity and mirth by all degrees of people." The Bishop of Lincoln, by a brief dated at Eynsham 1398, enjoined the University to observe her feast with a general procession, and pilgrims to her shrine were awarded forty days' indulgence.

HISTORY

The nunnery founded by St. Frideswide passed shortly after her death (c. 740) into the hands of

secular canons. They added little to the wealth or importance of the institution to which they succeeded. The surviving indications of the little church which Didan built for St. Frideswide and the details which commemorate her will be described when we deal with the architecture of the cathedral (Chapter III.). Here it must be recorded that Didan's church was almost completely destroyed on St. Brice's Day, 1002. On that fatal day *Æthelred the Redeless* ordered a general massacre of the Danish invaders to take place throughout the land.

The order was faithfully executed at Oxford. Fleeing in their extremity to Didan's church, the Danes burst open the doors and sought refuge within its walls. The strength of the building rather than its sanctity gave them a momentary respite. The citizens failed to dislodge them. But, not to be balked of their prey, they set fire to the wooden roof, and, together with the Danes, the fabric of the church, with all its ornaments and records, perished in the flames. In atonement, or as a thank-offering, *Æthelred* made haste to rebuild it. The work was soon interrupted by the avenging Danes. Oxford was captured and burned by them in 1009. Sweyn descended upon the town and inflicted a heavy fine upon it. *Æthelred* fled to Normandy, taking refuge, it is to be observed, at the court of his brother-in-law, Richard-le-Bon, the great church-builder. Upon Sweyn's death he returned, and perhaps resumed the rebuilding of St. Frideswide's. The richly-carved capitals of the choir, according to one view, are held to bear witness to the influence of Byzantine art which *Æthelred*'s



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, OXFORD

From the south-east. The lower stage of the tower is Norman
with beautiful Early English above.

From a drawing by Herbert Railton.

exile and return helped to flow through Normandy into England.

The monastery itself remained of little account through all these years. The abbey of Abingdon and the abbey of Eynsham eclipsed it as completely as, ecclesiastically, Dorchester eclipsed Oxford at this period. It had fallen on very evil days at the time of the Norman Conquest. William of Malmesbury tells us that "few clerks were left there and they" (being seculars) "lived very much as they liked." The church also had fallen into a ruinous state. Whilst the regulars of Abingdon were increasing rapidly in wealth and importance, the property of the secular canons of St. Frideswide's was steadily deteriorating. At length, in the year 1111, it passed into the hands of Chancellor Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, who expelled the secular canons and installed regular Augustinian canons in their place. By a charter of 1122, Henry I. confirmed the property to the prior and canons of St. Frideswide. He presented it to his chaplain, Guimond, who presided over the canons as their first prior for nineteen years. The story is told that the occasion of Henry's presentation of the priory to Guimond was upon the following "very merry conceit":

"Seeing that the king preferred illiterate clerks, and other less deserving persons than himself, to high promotion in the Church, Guimond devised this policy to procure him the like licence. In reading before the king the epistle for the day, when he came to the passage 'it did not rain upon the earth for the space of III years' he pronounced it, *for the space of one, one, one years*. Upon the king's asking him why he

read after that manner, he replied with a smile that it was because his majesty was wont to reward those who read so with benefices and bishoprics. The king took the hint, and presented him with the Priory of St. Frideswide. Guimond, it is said, ‘repaired in very good sort the ruinous buildings thereof.’”

This probably refers to the monastic buildings rather than the church. It was probably under his successor, Robert of Cricklade (c. 1150–1175), who wrote a book upon the miracles of St. Thomas Becket, that the real rebuilding of the church of St. Frideswide took place, in the form in which, after many vicissitudes, it now mainly exists.

Under the regulars the priory soon waxed in wealth and privileges. Henry I., besides his formal foundation of the monastery, granted it the chapel of Holy Trinity by the East Gate, and also the right of holding an annual fair lasting for five days from the vigil of the Feast of the Translation of St. Benedict (11th July). From the profits of this fair, and the crowds of pilgrims who flocked to the shrine of St. Frideswide, the priory sucked forth much advantage. Ere long we find that it had also acquired the advowson of no fewer than seven churches in Oxford.

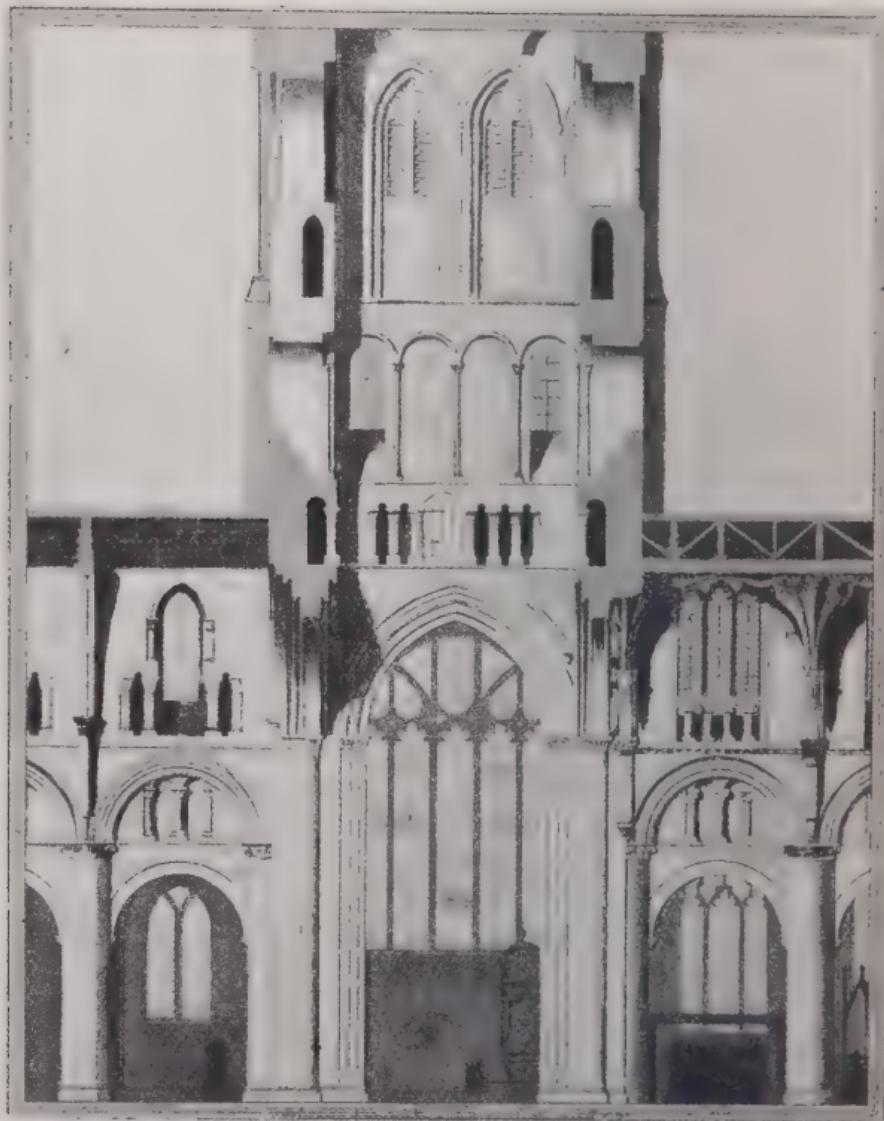
These resources stood it in good stead when, in 1190, the church and monastic buildings were severely damaged by a great fire which devastated the whole city. The reddened stonework of the rich Norman doorway of the chapter-house testifies, it is thought, to the action of the flames upon this occasion.

The priory of St. Frideswide never developed into

a house of any importance. It suffered in its finances and also in repute from the misrule of several priors, and was involved in a long series of quarrels with the town and, less frequently, with the university.

A curious incident occurred in 1268. The Jewish quarter lay close to St. Frideswide's. There had long been a feud between the priory and Jewry, whose synagogue rose in haughty rivalry before its gates. It was the custom for the parish priests, the scholars and citizens of Oxford, at the festival of the Ascension, to march in solemn procession to the church of "blessed Frideswyde." This procession more than once provoked the mocking protests of the Jews. As chattels of the king, they were outside the power of clergy or barons, and their insolence increased with their wealth and immunity. Upon this occasion a Jew snatched a crucifix from its bearer as the procession passed the synagogue, and trod it underfoot. Complaint was made to the king at Woodstock, who ordered the Jews to make a heavy silver cross to be carried in processions, and to erect a cross of marble where the outrage was committed.

By the middle of the XIVth century the priory had become so involved in debt, thanks to "misrule and other adversities," including money-lenders, that the king took it into his own hands and appointed receivers to husband its revenues. Of misrule, the prior at this period, Nicholas of Hungerford, affords a sufficient example. For in the same year (1354) the Bishop of Lincoln issued a commission to enquire into his excesses, since complaint had been made that he, with divers armed laymen, did break down the



A SECTIONAL DRAWING OF THE TOWER AND CROSSING OF
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, OXFORD

On the left is the nave, in the centre the north transept, and on the right the choir with its Perpendicular vaulting. The bays and the lower stage of the tower are Transitional Norman, with Early English in the upper stage of the tower.

From a drawing by G. Cattermole published in 1820.

doors of the church, assault the sub-prior and canons while they were chanting matins, and drag some of the canons from the choir and others from the dormitory, to the effusion of blood. With such an example of horse-play, it is not surprising to find that the rules against dancing and keeping sporting dogs were disregarded by the canons. In spite of the rebukes of the bishop, it is alleged that they continued to stroll about the town without leave, absenting themselves from services both night and day, drinking heavily and frequently coming to blows.

Conflicts with the citizens seem chiefly to have arisen over disputed rights in the fair of St. Frideswide. Thus, in 1336, according to a complaint laid by the prior, the townsmen besieged the priory, seized the prior and his nine canons, and imprisoned them, until through fear of death they were constrained to take an oath to observe the statutes of the town, or, in other words, to renounce their special rights during the fair. A few years later the prior again complains that the mayor and bailiffs have appropriated the toll and profits of the fair, to the loss of the monastery of £1000.

So the rather troublesome and not very distinguished career of the priory continued until it was brought to a close in 1525, when Cardinal Wolsey began to pull it down to make room for the great foundation which he called "Cardinal Wolsey's College." He began it upon a scale of great magnificence, but its completion was interrupted by his fall from power. To make room for the vast quadrangle known as Tom Quad, he swept away not only several of the old

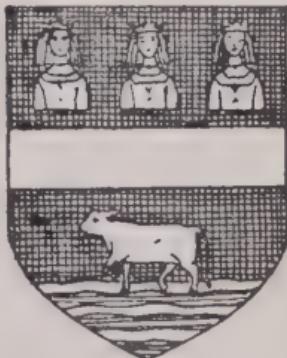
monastic buildings, but also the three western bays of the cathedral. One side of the old cloister was removed in order to make room for the new college hall. The shortened aspect of the nave, caused by the removal of the three western bays by Wolsey, has been mitigated by Sir Gilbert Scott's new western bay, which serves as an ante-chapel to the nave and choir, now forming the college chapel of Christ Church.

In 1524 Wolsey had obtained a bull from the pope and the assent of the king authorising him to suppress the priory of St. Frideswide, and to transfer the existing canons to other Augustinian houses. Their dwellings and revenues, amounting to nearly £300, were assigned to his proposed College of Secular Clerks. Upon Wolsey's downfall, the king converted Cardinal's College into "King Henry VIII.'s College," consisting of a dean and twelve canons (1532). He confiscated at the same time all the rich vestments and ornaments with which the cardinal had furnished St. Frideswide.

THE SEE OF OXFORD

A few years later (1545), this purely ecclesiastical foundation was surrendered to the Crown. On the same day Henry's commissioners received the surrender of the Cathedral Church of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Oseney, the new cathedral body which had been formed at the ancient and splendid abbey of that name upon the creation of

the See and Diocese of Oxford. For Oxford, which had originally been in the Diocese of Dorchester, had passed into that of Lincoln when Bishop Remigius removed the bishop's seat from Dorchester to Lincoln (c. 1070). But now, when Henry VIII. was creating a number of new bishoprics out of the proceeds of the despoiled monasteries, he divided the enormous Diocese of Lincoln, and established the See of Oxford, placing the bishop's seat at Oseney Abbey.¹



THE ARMS OF THE SEE
OF OXFORD

OSENEY ABBEY

Oseney Abbey was one of those many magnificent monastic foundations which, as Anthony Wood puts it, "have heretofore been and are not now." Its site was that of the cemetery near the railway station. Like St. Frideswide's, it was a house of Augustinian canons. It was in 1129, according to the Oseney Cartulary, that Robert d'Oilly the Second founded the church of St. Mary on the island of Oseney, just west of the castle of Oxford. The occasion of its foundation must be told in the words of Anthony Wood:

"The place, though low, where it had its situation, was yet very pleasant, both in respect of the chinking

¹ Berkshire and part of Wiltshire were added to the diocese in 1836, and the county of Buckingham was added a few years later.

rivulets running about it, as also for the shady groves and walks encompassing it, and soe enticing a place was it for pleasure that it often gave occasion to a noble lady of this city called Editha Forne, wife of Robert de Oilley (a woman given to no lesse superstition than credulity) to recreat and solace herself therin when she lived at the Castle. Who more particularly, as upon an evening she with her attendance walked by the river's side, saw a great company of pyes gathered together on a tree, making a hideous noise with their chattering. Which she beholding, did with slight notice passe it by for that time; but the next evening walking that way againe with her maidens (as she did afterwards the third time), found againe the pyes on the same tree, and making the like noise as before, seeming as 'twere to direct their chatterings to her. With which being much perplexed, wondred what the meaning might be; and returning home againe, sent for her confessor who was one Radulphus, a canon of St. Frideswyde's: and relating all the particulars that had several times hapned to her in this place, demanded of him what the reason of their chattering might be. He told her he could not directly resolve her at that time; but if she would walk there againe the next day, he would wait upon her and view the matter himselfe, and then give her an exact account. That time being come, they all walked the same way; where they found the pyes againe as before and making the like noise. Radulphus, seeing all this, 'O Madam,' cried he, the wiliest pye of all, 'these are noe pyes, but soe many poore soules in purgatory that doe begge and make all this complaint for succour and relief;

and they (knowing you to be pittyful and one that will have regard of their condition) doe direct their clamours to you, hoping that by your charity you would bestow somthing both worthy of their relief as also for the welfare of your's and your posteritye's soules.' These words being finisht, she replied : 'And is it soe indeed? now, de pardieux, if old Robin my husband will conceede to my request, I shall doe my best endeavour to be a means to bring these wretched soules to rest.' And therupon relating the whole matter to her husband, did soe much (by her continuall and frequent importunityes to him) bring the business about, that he a little while after (with the consent of Theobaldus, archbishop of Canterbury, and Alexander, bishop of Lincolne, in whose diocese this place then was) founded this monastery neare or upon the place where these pyes chattered, *anno Domini 1129*, dedicating it to St. Mary, allotting it to be a receptacle of canon regulars of St. Augustine, and made Radulphus, before mentioned, the first priour therof."

The site chosen was regarded by the monks of St. Frideswide as exceedingly damp and cold. But their own monastery, lying so close to the river, was none too warm a spot; for in 1258 the pope was moved to grant a faculty to the prior and Augustinian convent of St. Frideswide, enabling them to wear caps suited to their order during divine service, "so great is the severity of the cold in your parts."

The Augustinian priory founded by d'Oilly was raised by the pope to the rank of an abbey about 1154. Oseney was not only one of the wealthiest, but also one of the best-conducted houses in Oxfordshire.

There is, however, no evidence that any monastic schools were attached either to this abbey or to St. Frideswide's. The theory that the origin of the university is to be traced to such schools is therefore quite gratuitous, and is for other reasons most improbable.

Not one stone now remains in position of the monastic buildings or the church of Oseney, which is said to have been "more than ordinary excelling, and not only the envy of other religious houses in England, but also beyond the seas."

The abbey was suppressed and surrendered to the king in 1539. Whilst the Abbess of Godstow and the Abbot of Eynsham were liberally pensioned upon the dissolution of the monasteries, the Abbot of Oseney, Robert King, was appointed first Bishop of Oxford (1542). The bishop's seat was placed in the beautiful church of the suppressed abbey, and Gloucester College was assigned to him for his palace. The old monastic buildings of Oseney housed the dean and prebendaries of the renamed "Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary."

HENRY VIII.'S FOUNDATION

The surrenders of the respective deans and chapters of King's College and of the cathedral referred to above were the first steps (1545) towards the amalgamation and refounding of their respective institutions. Wolsey had begun to build a chapel for his college in Tom Quad. But that had been discontinued, and the church of St. Frideswide served as the chapel

of Henry VIII.'s College. It was an obvious economy to combine the staffs of cathedral and college. In November 1546, therefore, the bishop's seat was transferred from Oseney to St. Frideswide's, and college and cathedral were united and refounded under the title "Ecclesia Christi Cathedralis Oxon; ex fundatione Regis Henrici Octavi." Thus St. Frideswide's Church became the Cathedral Church of Christ in Oxford, and also the chapel of the college now finally called Christ Church. The new collegiate foundation consisted of a dean (Richard Coxe), eight canons,¹ eight chaplains, and one hundred scholars, etc. The site of Oseney Abbey was settled upon the bishopric. The abbey church fell into ruins and finally disappeared completely. Robert King remained bishop under the new dispensation; but ceasing to hold Gloucester College for his residence, he had built for him the picturesque old house in St. Aldate's, known as the Bishop's Palace. Most of the visible portion of this richly carved timber mansion dates from 1628.

The palace of the Bishops of Oxford at Cuddesdon was built by Bishop Bancroft at Laud's instigation (c. 1635). It was destroyed during the Civil War, and rebuilt by the famous Dr. John Fell, Dean of Christ Church and Bishop of Oxford, 1675. The Theological College at Cuddesdon was founded by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, 1845.

¹ Two of these canonries were abolished in 1863, leaving five stalls attached to the professorships and one to the Archdeacon of Oxford.

LATER HISTORY

During the XVIITH and XVIIITH centuries the character of the cathedral was more and more superseded by that of a college chapel. Dreadful alterations were made by Dean Brian Dupper (1629).

Many tomb-slabs were removed and destroyed in the course of repaving the building. The choir was filled with cumbrous wooden box-stalls. The windows were converted into large double lights to frame the Flemish glass of Abraham van Linge. The western ends of the north-east aisles were blocked with ugly screens. In the following century the clerestory openings were railed in by a stone balustrade. Vandalism was succeeded by neglect. At length, under Dean Liddell (1855-1892), a series of reforms was begun which restored both the cathedral services and the cathedral aspect of the building. First, Dean Dupper's atrocious innovations were removed by Mr. Billings (1856). In 1870 a sweeping and much-criticised restoration was begun by Sir G. Gilbert Scott. We have seen that he corrected Wolsey's curtailment of the west end by building out a bay which serves as an ante-chapel. He also formed the present entrance in place of a canon's lodgings which then blocked it. He designed the tracery of nearly all the windows of the aisles and cloister; restored the upper half of the south choir aisle walls and windows; remodelled the vestry in the south transept, and reconstructed the east end. Here he removed a large Decorated window which had been inserted in the



THE CHOIR OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, OXFORD
As it appeared in 1837.

From a drawing by R. Garland engraved by B. Winkles.

xivth century, and, basing his design upon records and indications of the Late Norman work, built a clerestory right across the east end, surmounting twin recessed round-arched windows divided by a massive central pier.

CHAPTER II

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL—THE EXTERIOR



Before entering the cathedral, we will take a survey of the remains of the monastic buildings of the house of St. Frideswide's. They are not very extensive. The greater part stood on the south side of the cathedral, and were, as we have seen, pulled down by Wolsey when he began to build his new college. They are now surrounded by canons' residences and gardens on the one side and Tom Quad on the other.

The first portions of Wolsey's college to be completed were the magnificent new kitchen and hall. The wits naturally made merry over this fact, which is commemorated by the well-known epigram:

Egregium opus. Cardinalis iste instituit Collegium et absolvit
popinam,

which may be Englished:

The Mountains were in labour once, and forth there came a
Mouse;
Your Cardinal a College planned, and built an eating-house!

The new kitchen was probably on the site of the old, adjoining the xvth-century frater or refectory, which is now used for undergraduates' rooms. It is approached by the archway in the south-east corner of Tom Quad, which leads to the cloister.



Hall Stairway
Christchurch

John Ruskin

THE SPLENDID STAIRCASE LEADING TO THE HALL OF WOLSEY'S COLLEGE

Although built as late as 1640, the vaulted roof is in the Late Perpendicular Gothic style.

Immediately within this archway is a single column which supports the vaulting over the staircase leading to Wolsey's magnificent hall.

STAIRCASE AND BELLS

The beautiful fan tracery of this vaulting is said to have been built in 1640 by Dean Fell, with the help of one Smith, an artificer of London. It is certainly one of the loveliest things in Oxford, though fault may be found with a certain flatness in the ribs. But it is extraordinary to find work in this style, of such beauty, being executed at Oxford at a date when Gothic architecture had everywhere else been abandoned or sunk into utter abasement.

Above this vaulting is the belfry, which now contains the famous ring of "Bonny Christ Church Bells," celebrated in Dean Aldrich's catch:

Hark! the bonny Christ Church bells,
One, two, three, four, five, six;
They sound so woundy great,
So wondrous sweet,
And they troll so merrily.

Hark! the first and second bell,
That every day, at four and ten,
Cries come, come, come, come to prayers,
And the verger troops before the Dean.

Tingle, tingle, ting, goes the small bell at nine,
To call the beerers home;
But the de'il a man will leave his can
Till he hears the mighty Tom.

This ring of twelve bells has a notable history.



THE TRANSEPTS OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL,
OXFORD, in 1821

Showing the Transitional Norman nave on the right and a
glimpse of the south transept on the left.

From a drawing by F. Mackenzie engraved by J. Le Keux.

Oseney Abbey is known to have boasted “a large and melodious ring of bells, the best as was thought in England.” When that monastery was dissolved and the cathedral church translated from Oseney to the church of St. Frideswide, these bells were brought hither and hung in the cathedral tower.

Hautclerc, Douce, Clement, Austin, Marie, Gabriel et John, they are named in the hexameter. They hung here until the walls of the tower began to crack under their weight, when they were removed to the bell tower built by Mr. Bodley above the hall staircase (1879). Their numbers have been increased, first to ten (1680), and then to twelve, on the occasion of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee (1897). But most famous of them all was Thomas, now known as Big Tom, the great bell from Oseney, which then bore the inscription:

In Thomæ laude resonō Bim Bom sine fraude.

(=in English: In praise of Thomas I ring Bim Bom truly.)

Tom was recast several times. Upon the last occasion, 1680, it was decided to house the bell over the main gateway in Tom Quad, built by Wolsey. Bishop Fell enlisted the services of Sir Christopher Wren, who added to Wolsey’s “Faire Gate” an octagonal cupola (1682), in which Tom is now fixed. This great bell is 7 ft. 1 in. in diameter, and weighs over seven tons. The inscription runs: “MAGNUS THOMAS CLVSIVS OXONIENSIS RENATUS. APRILIS VIII. ANNO MDCLXXX.,” etc. (*Great Thomas, Gate-keeper of Oxford, recast April 8th, 1680*). Ever since the anniversary of the Restoration, May 24th, 1684, the

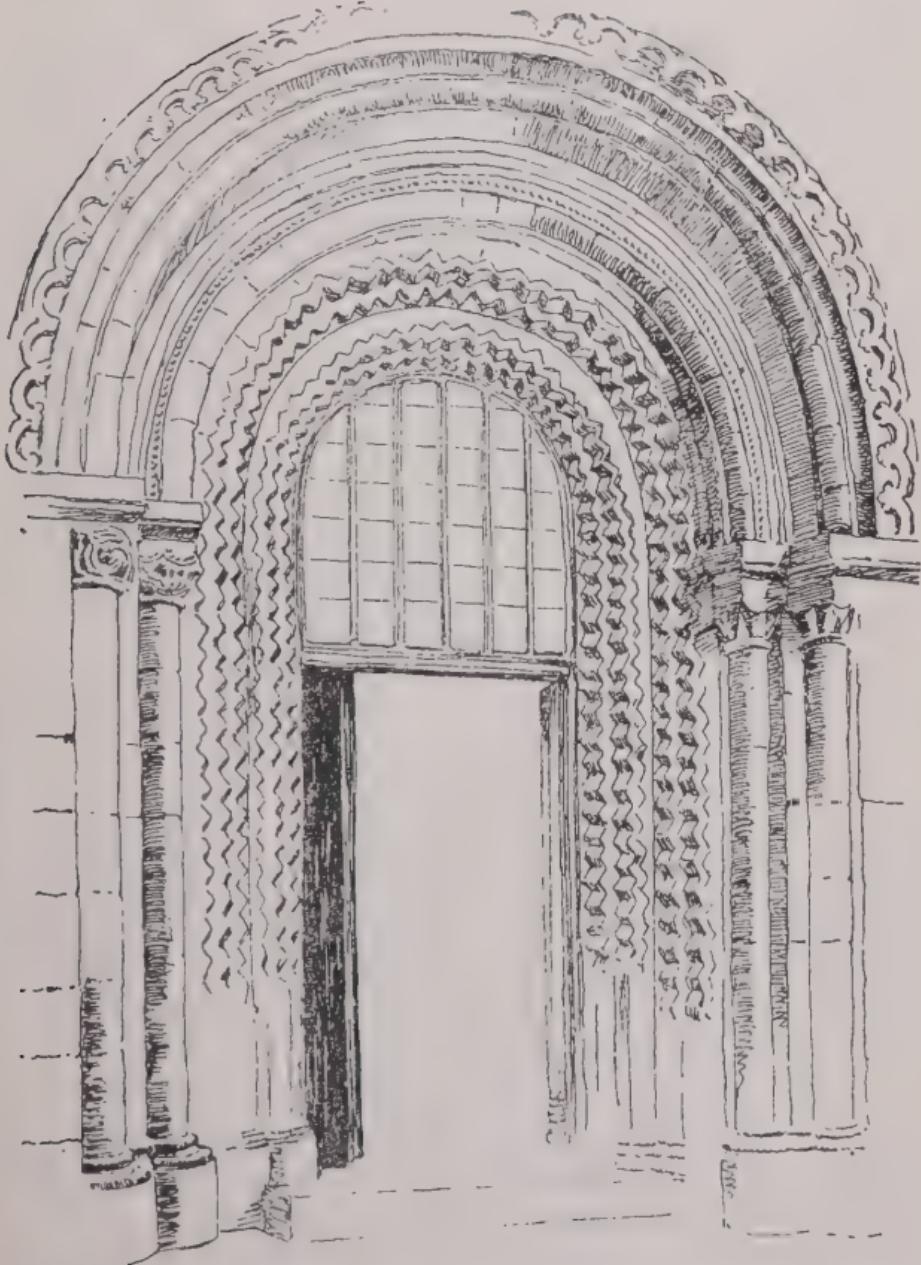
The Cloister

cracked B flat of Great Tom has nightly tolled forth from Tom Tower the signal for all scholars to repair to their respective colleges and halls, and for the closing of all college gates, at 9.5 p.m. One hundred and one strokes he booms forth, tolling the hundred students of the scholastic establishment and the one "outcomer" of the Thurston foundation, in place of the "tingle, tingle, ting" of "the small bell at nine" of Dean Aldrich's catch. The word "Clusius" in the inscription refers to this function of Big Tom as a "closer" of gates.

THE CLOISTER

The entrance to the cloister is down the steps to the left under the belfry. Beyond them, a row of gables marks the old prior's house and canons' dormitory, now used as canons' residences. The eastern limit of the prior's garden is marked by a fine xvith-century wall. The monastic fish-ponds lay without. Meadow Buildings occupy the site of the monastic infirmary, beyond the xvth-century refectory. The cloister, which replaced the smaller Norman one, and encroached upon the west aisle of the south transept, was built at the close of the xvth century. Part of the eastern and the whole of the southern alleys are original Perpendicular work of that date.

The vaulting of the northern and the remainder of the eastern alleys is by Gilbert Scott. The bosses of the lierne vaulting of the older portion of the eastern alley are decorated with heraldic shields, amongst



THE NORMAN DOORWAY OF THE CHAPTER-HOUSE OF CHRIST CHURCH

It is a good example of simple chevron ornament. The stone-work is reddened by the fire of 1190.

which will be recognised the Montacute arms and the greyhound coat, repeated from the Nowers tomb within the cathedral (see Chap. III.). The bosses of the vaulting of the northern alley are adorned with the arms of eminent men connected with the cathedral and college: those of the original southern alley with a curious series of faces showing contemporary head-dresses. The western alley was destroyed by Wolsey.

This cloister was built at the expense of Robert Sherborne, Dean of St. Paul's and afterwards Bishop of Chichester, who also erected the "sumptuous dwelling-house next to the dormitory" for the use of the prior (1489). This house was afterwards (1560) extended so as to abut upon the chapter-house.

THE CHAPTER-HOUSE

The entrance to this lovely room, a very perfect chamber in the Early English style, is through a handsome Jacobean door set in a deeply recessed Norman doorway. The reddened stonework of this doorway, which was probably built in Prior Guimond's day (1122), bears witness to the disastrous fire of 1190 referred to above (p. 19). It will be noticed that the zigzag mouldings do not reach to the base. This seems to indicate reconstruction at some time or other. A horse-shoe pattern is the design of the ornamentation of the outermost order. Within it two plain roll mouldings, with a line of bead ornament between them, are carried by nook-shafts with ornamental capitals. Four lines of simple chevron moulding

form the innermost order, framing the Jacobean door. Two round-headed openings flank the doorway on either side. Rebuilding may have been rendered necessary by the fire which damaged the church and monastic buildings in 1190 and has left its mark upon the doorway. Certain it is that, in the year 1220 or a little later, Prior Guimond's Norman building was converted into an Early English chamber. The east end was filled by a beautiful arcade, pierced for light by five lancet windows, enriched by dog-tooth ornament on the moulding and handsome foliage in the spandrels. The north and south sides are lit by similar lancet windows. The glass, most of it exceedingly beautiful, dates from the xvith and xviith centuries. Traces of mural painting can be discerned between the ribs of the vaulting. The points of intersection of these filleted ribs are adorned by handsome bosses showing a Madonna and Christ, and other subjects, surrounded by rich and elaborate foliage.

A particularly charming glimpse of the vaulting and window tracery of the cloister is obtained through the top light of the doorway. Several monumental stones reward investigation. Most remarkable is the foundation-stone of Wolsey's college at Ipswich, bearing the date 15th June, 1528, which is placed in the wall beneath the east window. The fragment of a



A SCULPTURED BOSS IN THE VAULTING OF THE CHAPTER-HOUSE

tomb-slab on a stone seat is believed to commemorate Ela, Countess of Warwick (1300). The arms of Richard, Duke of Cornwall, appear upon two stone squares on the north and south walls, the double-headed eagle of the Roman Empire reminding us that he was King of the Romans.

Richard, who died in 1272, was father of Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, who founded the Cistercian Abbey of Rewley in Oxford. Richard had intended to establish a chantry of three secular priests to pray for his soul. This scheme was enlarged by Edmund, who founded a college for students of the Cistercian Order at Oxford, where mass should be said daily in memory of his father. This house of study was dedicated in 1281. It was erected on the northern half of the island of Oseney.

The island of Oseney, lying west of the castle, had been divided equally between Robert d'Oilly and Roger d'Ivri. The abbey of Oseney (see p. 23) obtained from the former the southern half of the island, and from Bernard of St. Walery a part of the northern half; the remainder passing to Richard, King of the Romans, derived from him its name of *regalis locus* (king's place), and gave its title to the abbey now founded there (*de regali loco* = Rewley).

Chippendale chairs, an Elizabethan table, and a wrought-iron xvth-century strong-box with an elaborate lock, complete the furniture of the room, apart from modern lecture-room details. For the chapter-house, after a period of grievous neglect during which it was used as a cellarer's pantry, was restored in 1880, and now serves as a divinity lecture-room.

The inner room, approached by steps on the south side, contains some interesting historical portraits. It was added in the middle of the xvith century, connecting the chapter-house with the house of the prior. Here is kept the MS. of the Cartulary of St. Frideswide.

THE TOWER AND SPIRE

Before entering the cathedral it remains to examine the massive tower and stubby spire, of which we shall already have caught several glimpses both from Tom Quad and the cloister.

The lower stage of the tower, with its circular corner turrets, is Norman. It was probably built before 1180, the date of the translation of St. Frideswide. For before that event mention is made of a mysterious light which shone above the tower, and was believed to issue from the relics of that saint.

The second stage of the tower and the spire are Early English. The design of the upper stage is very beautiful. Each of the four sides has two windows of two lights apiece, with a quatrefoil opening in the head. The arches of these windows, which are continued as an arcading round the corner turrets, are surmounted by a handsome corbel-table.

The design of these windows is repeated with slight variations in the single windows of two lights which lighten the faces of the concluding stage, the plain, short spire. Light pinnacles (restored) at the four corners, terminating in pyramidal octagons, carry out the design of the round corner turrets of the

Norman tower and the arcaded turrets of the second stage, whilst harmonising with the octagonal spire.

This spire is, as we have said, plain and stumpy,



DOUBLE SQUINCH ARCHES IN THE TOWER OF CHRIST
CHURCH CATHEDRAL

insignificant almost; but it is of very great interest architecturally. It is assigned to the year 1225, or thereabouts, and represents one of the first essays of English architecture in the direction of the soaring stone spires of later cathedrals. Its modesty is in

keeping, indeed, with the half-concealed site of the smallest cathedral in England.¹ But the reason for its lowliness is, no doubt, that it was experimental. The masons who built it were cautious, afraid of their own daring, as it were, in building so lofty a construction in stone even upon the solid base of the Norman tower. "In this first effort they did not dream of the tapering elegance of the soaring spire of Salisbury, any more than of the rich ornamentation, the profusion of exuberant pinnacles, the statues and buttresses, gargoyle, crockets and arabesques, with which their successors bedecked St. Mary's, or the Clocher Neuf at Chartres. Strength and security was their chief aim here, though the small turrets which surmount the angles of the tower may perhaps be regarded as the forerunners of such exuberant ornamentation."²

Before entering her church, we may observe the worn figure of St. Frideswide in a pinnacle at the corner of the transept aisle (north).

¹ The height of the spire is 144 feet; that of the nave 41½ feet. The total length of the cathedral as it now stands, 175 feet, and the width of the nave and aisles, 54 feet.

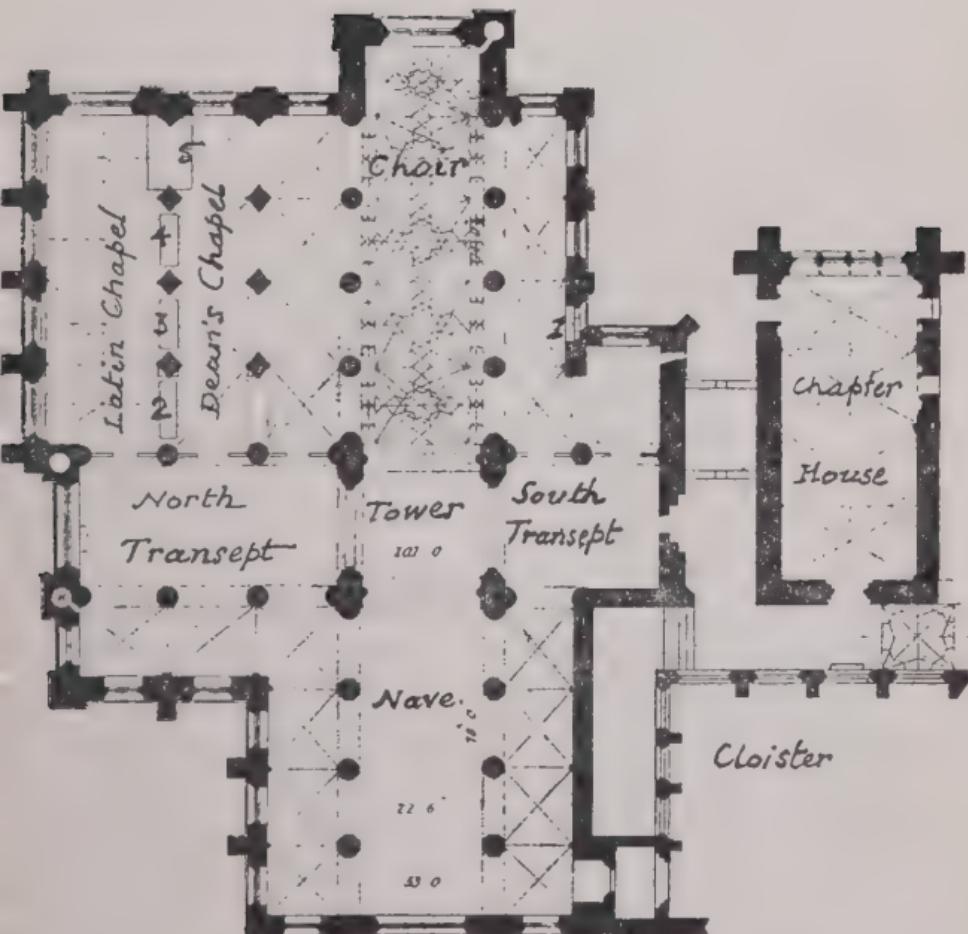
² *Oxford and its Story*, p. 15. By Cecil Headlam. Mediæval Towns Series (Dent).

CHAPTER III

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL—THE INTERIOR

Entering the dark double archway in the southern half of the eastern side of Tom Quad, we salute upon our left the long memorial lists of those members of Christ Church who fell in the Great War. In Sir Gilbert Scott's western bay, or ante-chapel, a splendid vista is disclosed of the Norman nave and choir, of four bays each, separated by the crossing beneath the Norman tower, and terminating in the sanctuary bay and Gilbert Scott's conjectural restoration of the east end. The nave and choir are flanked by aisles, as were also the transepts. But the eastern aisle of the north transept has been absorbed and extended by the Lady Chapel and the Latin Chapel, and that of the south transept by the St. Lucy Chapel. An enlargement of the cloister in the xvth century likewise encroached upon the western aisle of the latter transept. The presence of aisles attached to the transepts is to be noted as a very unusual feature.

The Lady Chapel, where the grafting of the Early English style upon a base of Norman work may be clearly traced, is of the same date as the chapter-house, the upper storey of the tower and the spire (1220–1240). The Latin Chapel and St. Lucy's Chapel are good examples of the Decorated style a hundred years later.



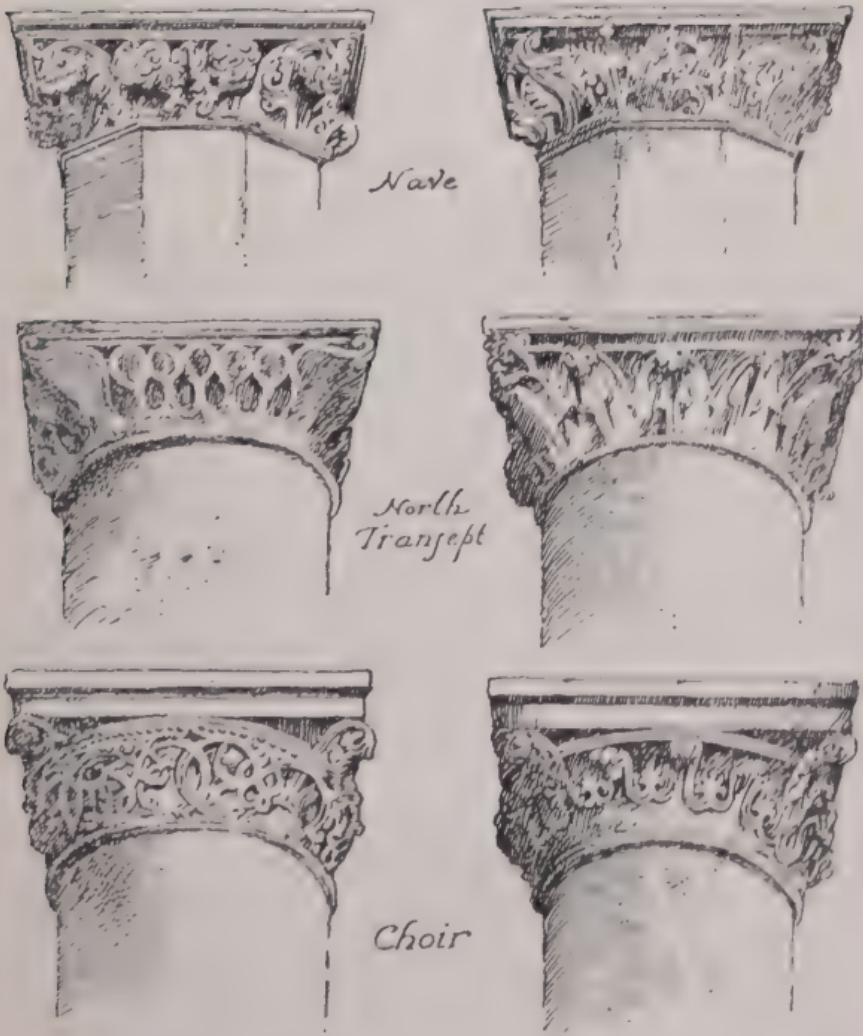
PLAN OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, OXFORD

The triforium and clerestory in the nave afford an interesting example of the latest Norman or Transitional style. The clerestory consists of a pointed arch enriched with shafts at the angles, and supported on either side by low circular arches which form the openings of a wall passage. The arrangement of the triforium is remarkable. The massive pillars of the nave are alternately circular and octagonal. From their capitals, which are large with square abaci, spring circular arches with well-defined mouldings. These are, in fact, the arches of the triforium, which is here represented by a blind arcade of two arches set in the tympanum of the main arch. The true arches of the nave spring from half-capitals set against the pillars, and are plain with a circular moulding towards the nave. The crown of these arches is considerably below the main capitals of the pillars, from which the upper or triforium arches spring. The half-capitals assist in carrying the vaulting of the aisles.

This arrangement is very unusual, but a parallel may be found at Romsey Abbey and elsewhere.

Some time towards the close of the xvth century, Perpendicular windows were inserted in the Norman clerestory of the choir, which was then remodelled in order to carry the elaborate vaulting with beautiful openwork pendants which forms so charming a feature of the building and harmonises so remarkably well with the robust Norman work which it crowns.

This rich and graceful pendent roof is similar to that of the Divinity School (1444-1480), and must surely be attributed to the same period, though it is often assigned to Cardinal Wolsey.



NORMAN CAPITALS IN CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

The two at the top of the page are in the nave, the two in the centre in the north transept, and the two lowest in the choir.

The extraordinarily rich and varied carvings on the half-capitals of the nave and choir show undeniable signs of Byzantine influence. The foliage ranges from simple, spade-like leaves, to an elaborate fleur-de-lis, whilst in the choir there is a rich design of interlacing scrolls and foliage upon three weather-worn capitals.

The condition and nature of these last capitals furnished Mr. J. Park Harrison with one of the arguments by which he supported his theory that the choir and aisles constitute a Saxon church, the church which Æthelred is said to have built (1004) after Didan's church had been destroyed upon the occasion of the massacre of the Danes on St. Brice's Day (see Chap. I.). He held that these capitals are much older than the rest, and that they indicate the Byzantine influence brought by Æthelred in his train upon his return from exile in Normandy; and that their weather-beaten condition is due to exposure when the church fell into a ruinous state in the middle of the xith century.

It is an attractive theory, acutely argued by its author. But however much one may be inclined to accept it, the fact remains that the opinion generally held is that the parts I have labelled Norman were built in the third quarter of the xiith century, and were not merely restorations with additions of Late Norman work in the time of Robert of Cricklade (1150-1175).

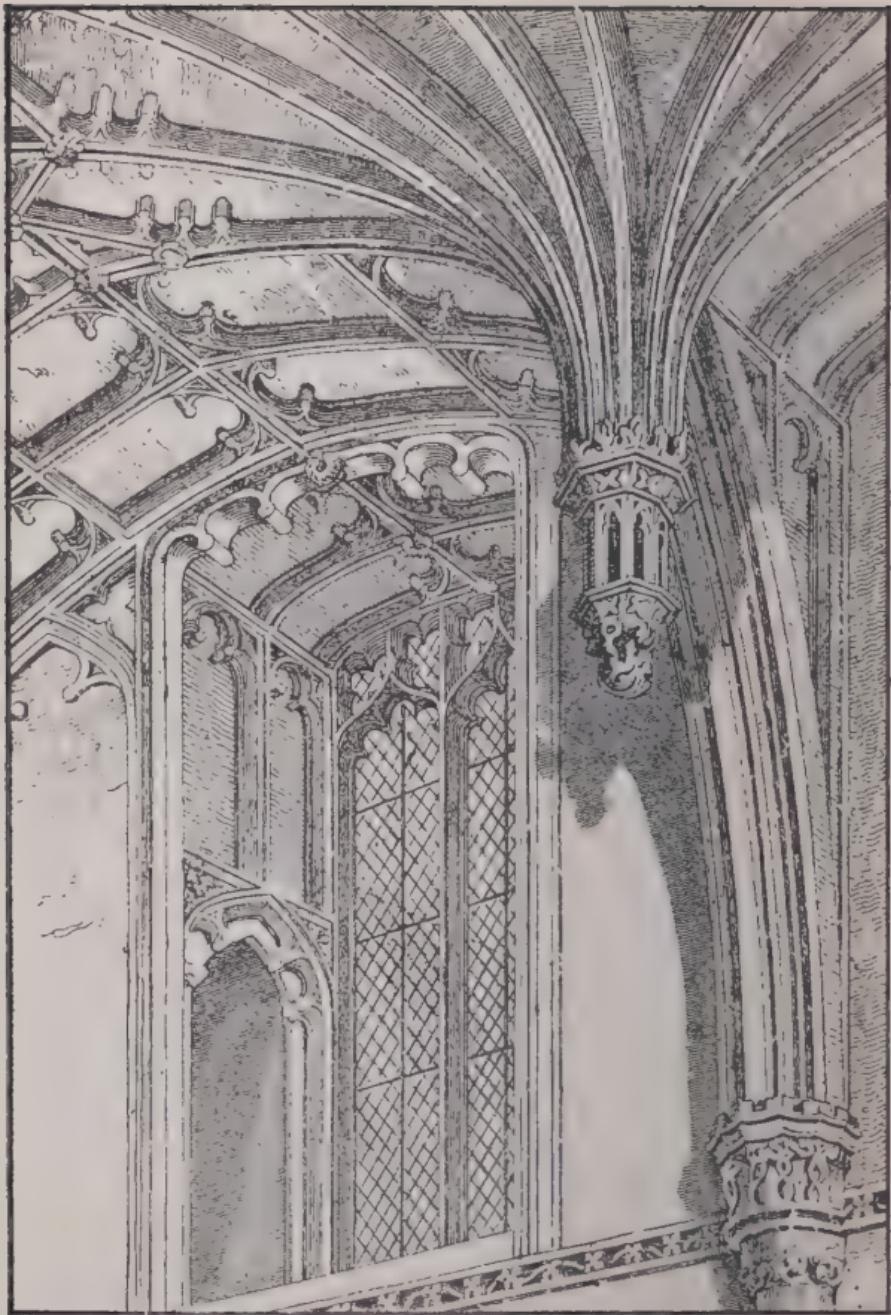
But if we discard this theory of a Saxon church built by Æthelred, is there no part of the cathedral which carries us back to the days when Didan built for his daughter St. Frideswide that first "Church within the præcincts of the City of Oxon"?

The answer is to be found in the ragstone east wall of the Lady Chapel and north choir aisle.

Excavations conducted by Mr. J. Park Harrison in 1887 revealed traces of what may reasonably be supposed to be three apses, Saxon work of the VIIIth century, and therefore remains of the church built by Didan for St. Frideswide, and perhaps enlarged in her time. The traces still visible will be found in the above-mentioned wall of the Lady Chapel and north choir aisle. They consist of two rough, round-headed arches, divided by a XIIIth-century multi-columned pier. The level of the Norman pavement is nearly two feet above the sill of the southern of these two archways, which are not of the same height or width, and may therefore be of a slightly different date. In that case, the latter might be part of the addition to the church supposed to have been made by St. Frideswide. Outside the eastern wall, and in a line with these round-headed openings, Mr. Harrison's excavations revealed curved foundation walls of rubble and concrete, the remains, as he argued, of three Saxon apses. Traces of a fire, charcoal and reddened stone, seemed to point to the destruction of the church on St. Brice's Day, 1002, when, as we have seen, it was burnt down in order to destroy the Danes who had taken refuge within.

Mr. Harrison's theory was hotly combated in the *Proceedings of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society, 1887-1889*.

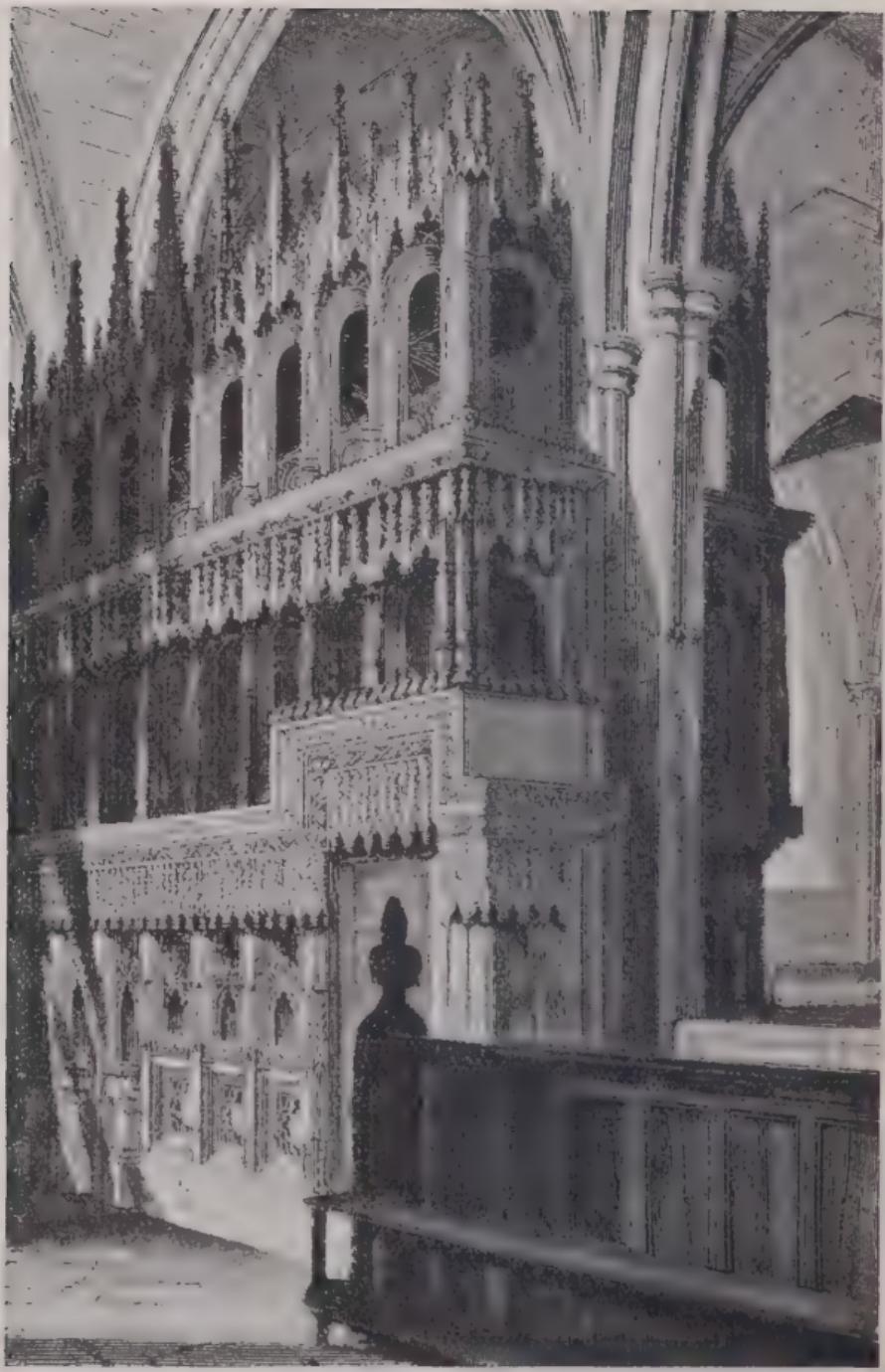
Some archaeological experts hold that these archways and the exterior foundations are indeed Saxon work, but assign them to a later date, such as that of



DETAILS OF THE VAULTING OF THE ROOF OF THE CHOIR OF
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

The six pendants on either side form one of the most remarkable
features of the interior.

From a drawing by G. Cattermole.



THE WATCHING-CHAMBER IN CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

This elaborate Perpendicular chantry chapel appears to have derived its name from the watch kept on the shrine of St. Frideswide.

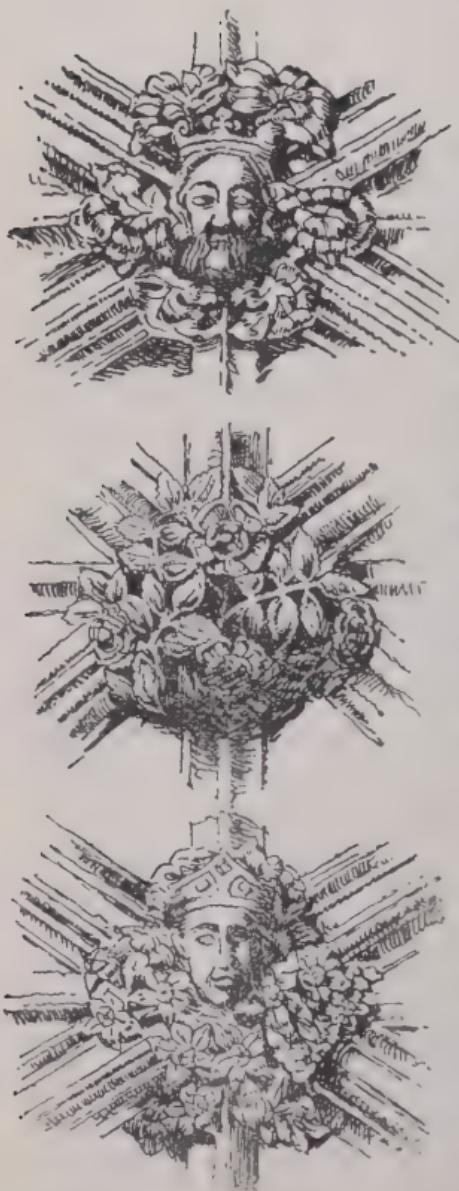
Æthelred's restoration in 1004. The weightiest argument in favour of this view is that a triple apsidal termination was unknown at so early a date in England. Others, notably Mr. James Parker, maintain (as I think wrongly) that so far from being Saxon work cut into by the Norman buttresses and building which were superimposed upon it, arches and wall alike were Norman work of the xiith and xiiith centuries. He admitted, however, that the foundations discovered outside the south door might possibly be those of an earlier church.

CHAPELS, GLASS AND MONUMENTS

In examining the details, we will first devote our attention to those parts of the cathedral which are most intimately connected with the memory of St. Frideswide. These are (apart from the three Saxon arches referred to in the last section) the Latin Chapel, in the extreme north-east corner, and the adjoining Lady Chapel.

THE LATIN CHAPEL

The Latin Chapel was built in the Decorated period towards the middle of the xivth century, embracing and extending part of the north transept aisle. It owes its name to the Latin service, which was here read daily, except during the Commonwealth, until the year 1861. It has also been known by the names of St. Frideswide's, St. Catherine's, and the Divinity Chapel. The figures of the two saints are represented in the



THREE BOSSES IN THE VAULTING
OF THE LATIN CHAPEL

They are fine examples of the
Decorated style.

windows. St. Catherine of Alexandria is reputed to have been the instructress of St. Frideswide, and was also the patroness of divinity students, to whom lectures were delivered here.

The bosses of the vaulting of this chapel are very richly carved. So, too, is the Tudor woodwork of the stalls and desks, which were possibly moved hither from the choir in Dupper's day. A few worn mediæval tiles remain to indicate how this and the Lady Chapel were once paved.

A gilded mitre, hanging in the south-west corner, indicates that John Fell, bishop and dean, was buried near at hand. His tomb is at the west end of the nave. This is that Dr. Fell of whom Tom Browne wrote the lines known in every nursery:

I do not like thee, Dr. Fell;
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this I know full rarely well,
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell.

Fell was a man of strong character, a stern disciplinarian, and a great benefactor both to his college and to the University, especially to the Clarendon Press (1660-86). He built Fell's Buildings at Christ Church and the bishop's palace at Cuddesdon. But stern disciplinarians are not always popular; and Browne's simple lines expressed a universal truth. Fell is, therefore, best remembered by a spiteful epigram.

The memorial of the Saxon saint which we are to look for here is in the beautiful, albeit somewhat damaged, XIVth-century glass. St. Frideswide, with a cross, is shown in the easternmost of the three side windows; St. Catherine, with her wheel in one hand and sword in the other, in both the first and third windows. In the westernmost window, the figure in the centre is that of a Madonna and Child. The Madonna holds a flower on three stalks in her right hand, which is supposed to be a sprig of hawthorn, and to have reference to the sojourn of St. Frideswide in the woods of Binsey, once called "Thornberrie." In the central window are the figures of the Archangel Gabriel, the Virgin and an archbishop, representing the scene of the Annunciation.

The whole story of St. Frideswide, as told in Chapter I., is illustrated in the window at the east end of this chapel. It was composed by Sir E. Burne-Jones in fulfilment of a bequest by Dr. John Bull (1858). The design of this window is exceedingly lovely in itself; but, unfortunately, when set up in glass it demonstrates that the artist was not proficient in the technique of the glazier. The details remain admirable, but the figures are overcrowded and

produce an impression of confusion; whilst the predominance of fiery reds creates a dazzling effect upon the eye which is enhanced by a superfluity of subjects, breaking and confusing the design of the whole. The



AN ELABORATELY
CARVED POPPY-HEAD
BENCH-END IN THE
LATIN CHAPEL

same artist also designed four other windows in the cathedral, which were executed by William Morris. That at the east end of the Lady Chapel is in memory of Frederick Vyner, an undergraduate who was murdered by brigands at Marathon. The superbly graceful and delicate window of the north choir aisle tells of the life and martyrdom of St. Cecilia. It was presented by Dr. Corfe, the cathedral organist, in 1875. The east window of the south choir aisle, in memory of a daughter of Dean Liddell, narrates the story of St. Catherine; and another window, at the west end of

the south nave aisle, in memory of Edward Denison, founder of "Settlements" in London, depicts Faith, Hope, and Charity, with smaller figures playing musical instruments.

THE SHRINE OF ST. FRIDESWIDE AND THE LADY CHAPEL

The site of the original tomb of St. Frideswide is not known. It was probably in the southernmost of the three Saxon apses (p. 47). But in the course of Mr. Billings' restoration, 1856, a small underground chamber was discovered beneath the north and south-east tower piers, 7 ft. long and $5\frac{1}{2}$ ft. in width and depth, which some have held to be the obscure resting-place from which the saint was moved in the year 1180. A more probable explanation is that this was the spot where the monastic treasures were stored, or where the university moneys were kept in what was known as St. Frideswide's Chest. Mr. Billings, however, suggested that this chamber may have had some connection with the mysterious light which is said to have issued from the relics of the saint and shone above the tower eight years before her translation. This miracle is recorded by Prior Philip, who succeeded to Robert of Cricklade about the year 1175, and wrote the *De Miraculis S. Fridewidæ*. Funds were badly needed for the rebuilding of the church, which was then in progress. The fame of St. Frideswide was spread abroad by the rumour of such miracles wrought at her tomb and by the writings of the prior. It was decided, therefore, to translate her relics from their obscure resting-place to some more prominent site in the church. Elaborate preparations were made for the occasion. In the presence of a notable gathering of prelates and nobles, the bones of the saint were taken up and "installed with much honour" in a

PACIFIC

LIBRARY

54 The Shrine of St. Frideswide

new shrine on the north side of the choir. Miracles continued to be wrought at the new shrine, and pilgrims crowded hither. The money thus brought in was doubly welcome, for it was needed not only for the building which had been in progress, but also for that which was rendered necessary a few years later, when the great fire of 1190 damaged both the church and monastic buildings. But the bones of St. Frideswide were far from having found their last resting-place. In 1289 they were again translated. They were placed in a new and more precious shrine, near the site of the old one, and most probably on or near the spot where the base of it, pieced together with loving care, is now in position.

For the very fame of the saint and the superstitious reverence in which her shrine was held marked it out for destruction by the reformers (c. 1548). The fragments were scattered; but the relics of the saint were rescued and concealed by zealous votaries until that tribulation should be overpast. In the meantime Catherine, the wife of Peter Martyr, a foreign Protestant theologian of high repute, who had been appointed Regius Professor of Theology, died and, as the wife of a canon of the cathedral, was buried near the place lately occupied by the shrine (1551).

Over her grave sermons were preached, contrasting the pious zeal of the German Protestant with the superstitious practices that had tarnished the simplicity of the Saxon saint. Then came another change. The Roman Church, under Mary Tudor, recovered a brief supremacy. The body of Peter Martyr's wife

was, by order of Cardinal Pole, contemptuously cast out of the church, and the remains of St. Frideswide were restored to their former resting-place. But it does not appear that any attempt was made to restore the shrine. Party zeal still prevailed. Angry contests continued between the adherents of the two parties, even after the accession of Elizabeth.

At length the authorities of Christ Church were commissioned to remove the scandal that had been caused by the inhuman treatment of Catherine Martyr's body. On 11th January, 1562, the bones of the Protestant Catherine and the Catholic St. Frideswide were put together, so intermingled that they could not be distinguished, and then placed together in the same tomb. Epitaphs were composed for the occasion. The last line of one of them, by John Calfhill, the sub-dean who had been responsible for the carrying out of this arrangement, cleverly suggests the calculated ambiguity of the proceeding:

Iam coeunt pietas atque supersticio.

(Now mingled here inseparably
True Faith and Superstition lie.)

Fragments of the marble base upon which rested the third and most splendid tomb of St. Frideswide were collected and pieced together in 1889 by Mr. J. Park Harrison, and set up beneath the easternmost arch between the Lady Chapel and the north choir aisle. The most remarkable feature of these late XIIIith-century fragments is the exquisitely sculptured foliage, which was possibly intended to symbolise the life of the saint when she took refuge in the woods. Remains

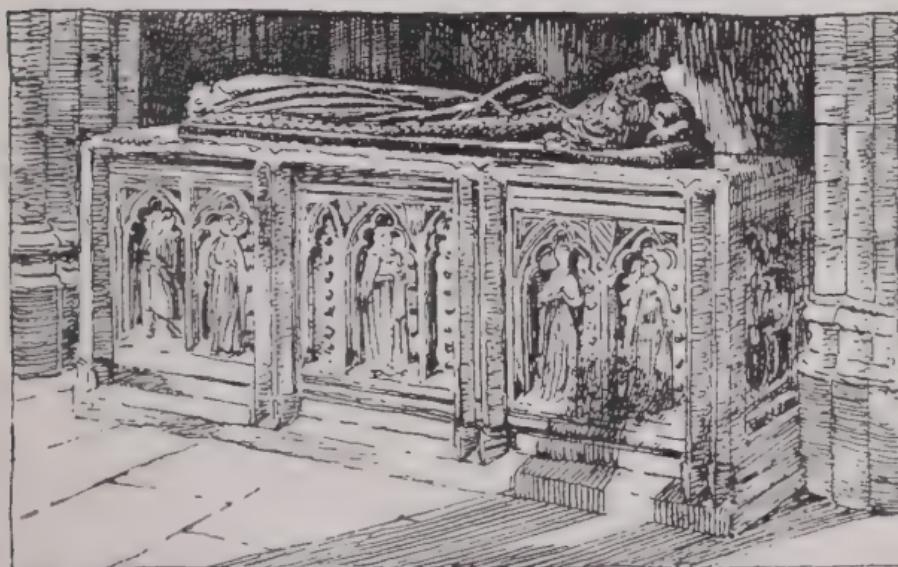
of colouring are observable, and several heads, the interpretation of which may be conjectured at pleasure. A recent brass in the centre of the middle bay of the Lady Chapel marks the site where the tomb is thought to have stood before it was disturbed. Angels with censers are painted upon the vaulting of this chapel, which perhaps derived from them its second title of the Chapel of the Guardian Angels. The western bay of this chapel was also formed out of part of the north transept aisle, when it was converted into a Lady Chapel for the cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the *xiiiith* century.

Beneath the easternmost arch, between this chapel and the Latin Chapel, is the extraordinarily beautiful chantry-tomb of the late *xvith* century known as the "Watching Chamber." A richly ornamented and very delicately carved stonework of Perpendicular design, surmounted by a carved wooden superstructure of the same period, encloses the remains of an unknown couple, who are indicated by the matrices of two brasses upon the slab of their large altar-tomb. It is possible that this tomb was used for keeping watch upon the gold and jewels which hung about the adjacent shrine of the saint, and thence derived its traditional name of the "Watching Chamber." That, however, was not its primary purpose, which was that of a chantry chapel, where masses might be said for the souls of the founders interred beneath it.

There are other tombs of great interest in the Lady Chapel. In the bay next to the "Watching Chamber" is the lofty altar-tomb of Elizabeth, Lady Montacute, grand-daughter of Simon de Montfort, who in

1346 endowed the priory with part of the Christ Church Meadows.

The Montacute arms which we have seen in the cloister probably commemorate this benefaction. Lady Montacute was twice married, first to Sir William Montacute, and secondly to Thomas, Lord Furnival. She had ten children, whose now mutilated



THE TOMB WITH THE EFFIGY OF ELIZABETH, LADY MONTACUTE,
IN CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

forms fill the panels of the north and south sides of the tomb. They were described and identified by Dr. Bloxam, and are valued as exhibiting a variety of contemporary costumes.

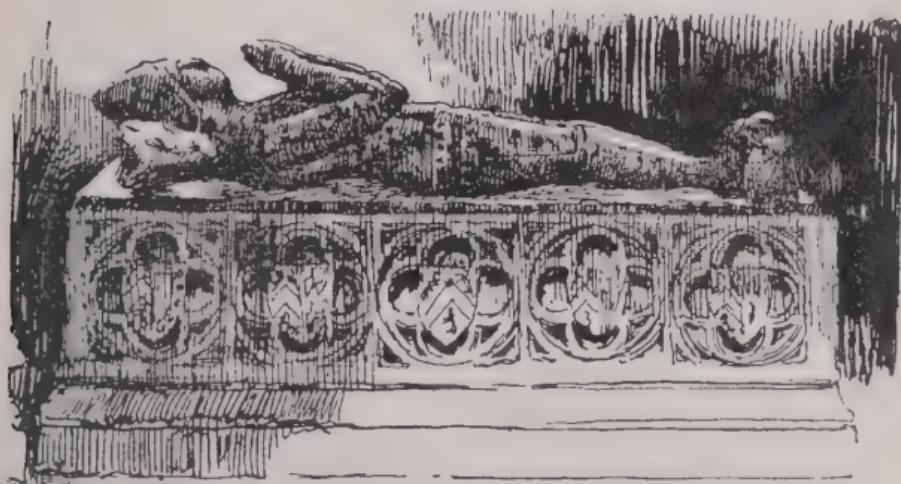
Figures of the Father and the Madonna and Child, and symbols of the Four Evangelists, decorate the ends of the tomb. Upon it reclines the recumbent effigy of Lady Montacute, clothed in a richly-coloured, close-fitting gown, fastened in front with ornamented

buttons, and slit up on either side so as to show an under-dress. Over this gown is a rich yellow mantle, fastened at the breast with a lozenge-shaped clasp, and decorated in gesso with fleur-de-lis and roundels. The head rests upon a double cushion, supported by two angels. "The hair is confined within a jewelled net; a veil covers the forehead, and over it is a rich plaited head-dress with a tippet attached" (Bloxam). A dog lies at her feet.

The next bay to the west contains the tomb of a prior. Once thought to be that of Guimond (see p. 18), it is now assigned to Alexander de Sutton, who was prior in 1300, a date more in accordance with the style of the monument, which is a canopied tomb of the XIVth century, richly adorned with crockets and ball-flower ornamentation. The head of the effigy, which is bare and tonsured, with flowing locks by the sides of the face, rests on a double cushion with a canopy ogee. The feet are set against a lion. The prior, who is clad in rich vestments, reposes on the slab of a plain, high tomb beneath a rich canopy, the sides of which, as described by Mr. Bloxam, are composed of "three pointed arches, cinquefoiled, with the heads springing from clustered shafts, the caps of which are sculptured with vine leaves and surmounted by three crocketed pediments with intervening and flanking pinnacles."

In the last bay of the Lady Chapel is the recumbent effigy of a knight in the full armour of the early XVth century. The feet rest against a collared dog. The head, encased in a conical basinet, which is laced to the camail, reposes upon a tilting helmet with a bull's

head for crest. Armorial bearings, including the greyhound coat and imp of Nowers, are displayed on the south side of the tomb, on a scutcheon at the head, and on the surcoat. The figure is thought to be that of Sir George Nowers (died 1425), a companion of the Black Prince, whose family were benefactors of St. Frideswide's, as their arms in the cloister testify.



THE TOMB AND EFFIGY, PROBABLY THAT OF SIR GEORGE NOWERS,
IN ONE OF THE BAYS OF THE LADY CHAPEL

The knight wears the plate armour and camail of the time of the Black Prince.

On the pier above this tomb is the tablet with bust, surmounted by the arms, of the author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Robert Burton lived, wrote, and died in Oxford (1639), student of Christ Church for forty years, and vicar, also, of St. Thomas'. At the side of the tablet, a medallion shows, characteristically, the "nativity" of that whimsical bookworm.

OTHER MONUMENTS

It remains to complete our survey of the more important monuments in the cathedral. In the north transept, under the large xvith-century window filled with modern glass, is the tomb of a notary, as may be inferred from the ink-horn and pen-case shown upon the shields. This was one James Zouch, who died in 1503 and bequeathed £30 towards the rebuilding of this transept, which was begun shortly after this date, but, apart from the window, not completed.

In the south choir aisle is the Late Gothic tomb of Bishop King (see Chap. I., p. 26). A more notable memorial of this last Abbot of Oseney and first Bishop of Oxford is the adjoining window. Here a portrait of the bishop is given with his arms, against a background of a church and towers which are supposed to represent the abbey of Oseney. Mr. A. W. Clapham has pointed out its similarity to a window in Lincoln's Inn Chapel by Bernard van Linge.

Attention should be called to the grotesque heads carved on the capitals of the xiith-century engaged pillars, corresponding with those of the north choir aisle. Many sepulchral slabs were removed and despoiled of their brasses when the choir was re-paved with black and white marble under Dean Dupper (1630). A few of these remain. With other memorial tablets of later date, they commemorate distinguished members of the "House."

It is not the design of this volume to enumerate every detail in a building. But mention must be made

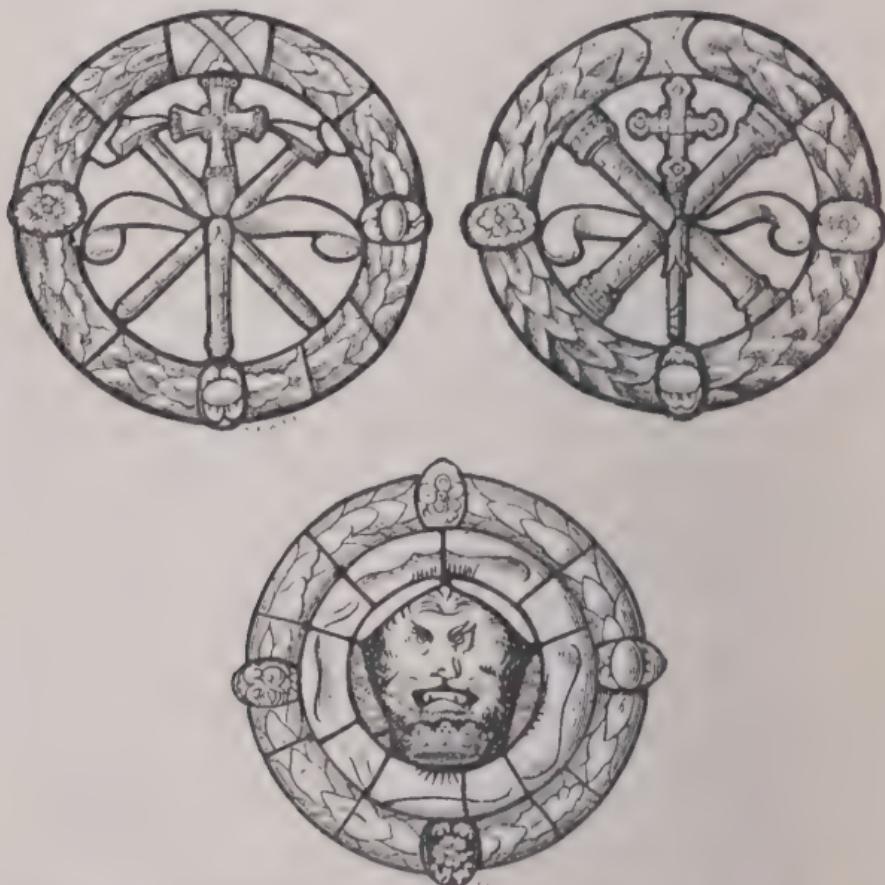
of two memorial stones in the chapel of St. Lucy. These are in memory of Sir Henry Gage, Governor of Oxford, who was killed at Culham Wood in 1644, and of Major-General John Smith, who rescued with his own hands the royal standard at Edgehill. It was in this chapel that many other Cavaliers who died during the siege of Oxford were buried.

THE ST. LUCY CHAPEL is a XIVth-century enlargement of the east aisle of the south transept. The glass in the east window is of the same period, and is remarkable for its rich colouring and also for the scene in which is depicted the murder of St. Thomas Becket by the four knights who rid Henry II. of "that pestilent priest" in Canterbury Cathedral. The head of the murdered archbishop was obliterated in accordance with the order of Henry VIII., and its place is filled with a piece of white glass. The tracery of this reticulated window is remarkable in that it starts below the springing of the arch.

Much of the old stained glass, together with the tracery and mullions of the windows, was destroyed by Dean Dupper to make room for the Flemish glass which was then in vogue. Of the painted glass put in at that time by Abraham van Linge, only that at the west end of the north aisle of the nave survives. It represents Jonah seated under his gourd, a dense mass of dark green foliage, with Nineveh in the background. Flags of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry and Yeomanry Regiments are hung from the northwest pier under the lantern.

In the gallery of the south transept, used as a museum, are preserved a fragment of a carved Saxon

tomb-slab and the base of a cross carved on the four sides with scenes from the Old Testament, both worth investigation.



BADGES OF CARDINAL WOLSEY IN A WINDOW IN THE NORTH AISLE OF THE NAVE OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, OXFORD

THE PULPIT. The Jacobean pulpit has a canopy surmounted by a pelican. There is a Norman double piscina in the east aisle of the south transept, and one of the Perpendicular period in the south choir aisle.

Close to the pulpit is a tablet, with a crowned and

winged skull, which is the memorial of the witty and accomplished Dean Aldrich (1689-1711). We have already quoted his catch, "The Bonny Christ Church Bells." He is said to have been as modest as he was versatile, and his versatility was astounding. The author of excellent handbooks on logic, heraldry and architecture, he was equally skilled in chemistry and theology. He earned both popularity and the praise of musicians by his catches, anthems and services. Peckwater Quadrangle at Christ Church and All Saints' Church in the High Street testify to his skill as an architect in the Renaissance style. As a specimen of his wit, his five good reasons for not abstaining from wine are still quoted:

If all be true that I do think,
There are five reasons we should drink;
Good wine: a friend: or being dry:
Or lest we should be by and by:—
Or any other reason why!

Aldrich was a great smoker. On one occasion a student wagered that if the dean were visited unawares at any given hour, he would be found to be smoking. A surprise visit was accordingly paid, but the bet was lost. For the dean at that moment, as he pointed out, was not smoking—only filling his pipe.

CHAPTER IV

ST. MARY'S AND SOME OTHER OXFORD CHURCHES

ST. MARY'S CHURCH



Whilst St. Frideswide's Church has become the Cathedral of Oxford and the College Chapel of Christ Church, the church of St. Mary in the High Street is, and has always been, the principal church of the University. The foundation of this church has been attributed to King Alfred. But the first record of it occurs in Domesday Book, which mentions two houses belonging to it. From early times it belonged to the king. It remained in the patronage of the Crown till Edward II. appropriated it to his newly-founded college of Oriel (1326). It did not belong to the University. But documentary evidence confirms the tradition that it has always been used as the principal church of the University. It was a parish church, borrowed for the transaction of all University business from the delivery of lectures and scholastic exercises to the conferring of degrees. Its connection with the University is confirmed by the fact that the University made itself responsible for its repair from time to time. The chancel was rebuilt in 1462. But in Henry VII.'s time the whole church had fallen into a ruinous condition, and (1486-92), at the expense of the University and with funds collected by it, the whole fabric was rebuilt as it now



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**THE BEAUTIFUL RENAISSANCE PORCH OF ST. MARY'S
CHURCH, OXFORD**

It was added in 1637 at the cost of Dr. Morgan Owen, chaplain to Archbishop Laud. The former heads of the Virgin and Child were shot at and destroyed in 1642.

stands, with the exception of the tower, spire, and some portions of Adam de Brome's chapel (west of the tower) and a small part east of the tower. At the same time windows were pierced in the north walls of the old Congregation House and the chapel west of the tower, whilst pinnacles were added to the buttresses to harmonise with the rest of the building.

When William of Wykeham built New College Chapel he set a fashion which soon converted Oxford into a city of pinnacles. In the Perpendicular style pinnacles were erected on Merton tower and transept, on All Souls chapel, on Magdalen chapel, hall and tower; nearly a hundred pinnacles decorated the schools and library. The nave, aisles and chancel of St. Mary's received the same ornaments, and pinnacles in the same style were added to the clusters of the XIVth-century tower and spire. These were not high, but observed a true proportion.

It was the grave fault of the excessively lofty pinnacles (beautiful no doubt in themselves) which were added in 1848 that they destroyed the true beauty of proportion and the effect of gradual transition which the XIVth-century builders had succeeded in giving to the tower and spire, and with which the ancient statues in their canopied niches were in perfect harmony. For the massive tower-buttresses are crowned with turrets showing canopied niches containing twelve over-life-size statues, and decorated with ball-flower ornament. Two of the statues on the buttresses facing south are modern; nine others are copies (c. 1895) of the old statues, stored now in the ancient Congregation House, which still exhibit the

carefully calculated gestures and studied designs of the original XIVth-century workers. They form a series which recalls that on the west front of Wells Cathedral, a rare example of English sculpture in a *genre* which is so plentifully and superbly illustrated by the French cathedrals.

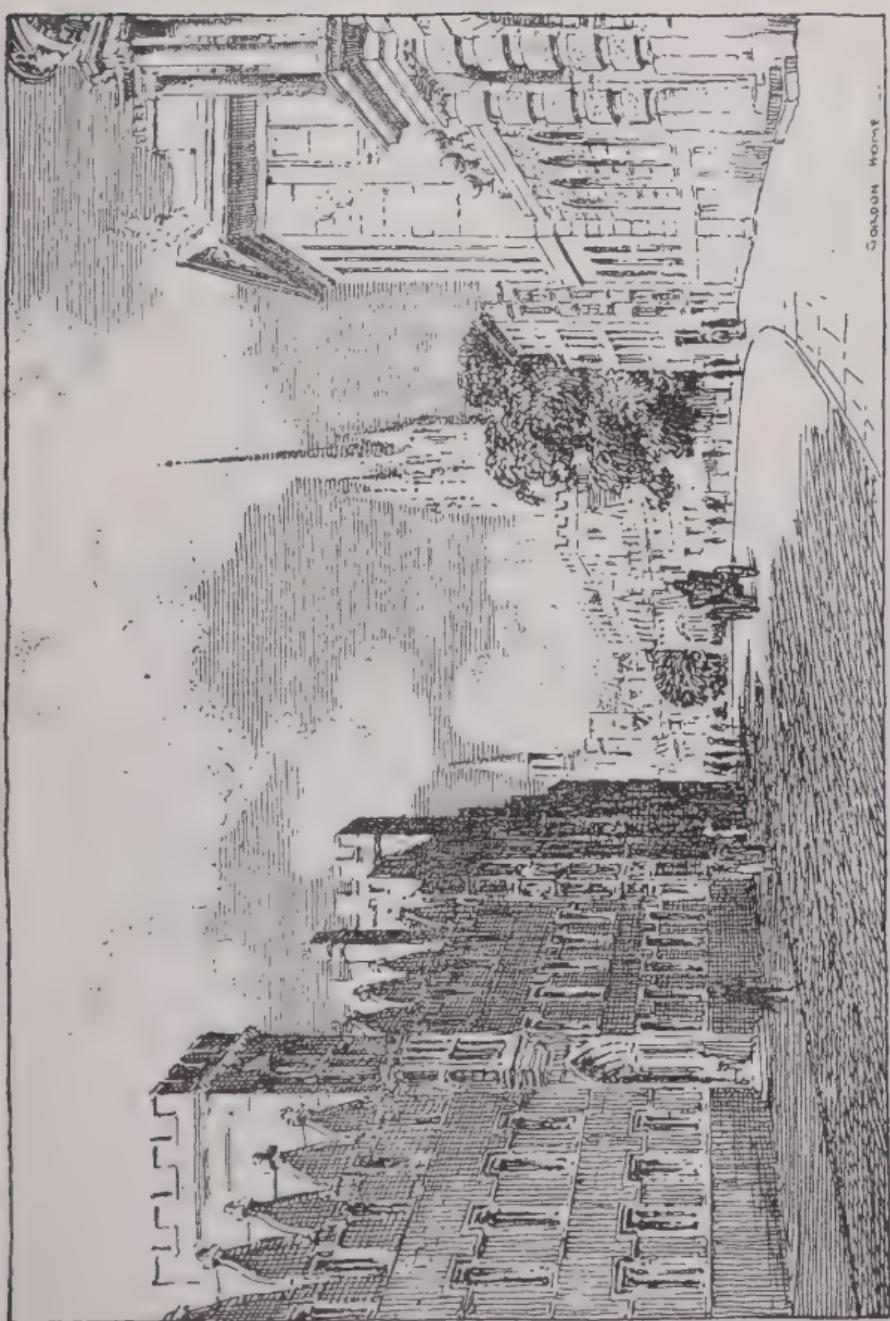
On the face of the south buttress of the west front stood the statue, beautifully posed, of the Virgin with the infant Christ, the Lady of the Church thus occupying the most important angle of the tower; on the left, St. John the Evangelist with the cup. Between the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist, patron saint of the chapel of Merton, Walter of Merton looks out towards the college he founded. These three are from new designs by Mr. Frampton.

On the north-west angle of the tower is St. Cuthbert of Durham, facing northwards. He holds in his hand the head of St. Oswald, the Christian king slain by Penda, and looks towards his own north country and Durham, the great diocese so intimately connected through its bishops and monastery with the early collegiate foundations of the universities. Northwards, too, towards his cathedral church of Lincoln, faces St. Hugh, with the wild swan of Stowe nestling to him as was its wont, with its neck buried in the folds of his sleeve. This statue is on the eastern buttress at the north-east angle, and on the eastern face of the same buttress is an equally noble statue of Edward the Confessor. On the south-east angle stands, it may be, the murdered Becket, and among the other figures St. Edmund Rich may perhaps be counted.¹

¹ *Story of Oxford*, pp. 177-181. Mediæval Towns Series (Dent).

OXFORD HOUSE

"THE HIGH" OR HIGH STREET, OXFORD, SHOWING ST. MARY'S CHURCH



The nave of St. Mary's (1487-98) consists of six bays. The aisles are of equal width. The east window is composed of seven uniform compartments above a series of niches forming the reredos. The porch, the principal entrance to the south aisle, was erected in 1637 at the cost of Dr. Morgan Owen, chaplain to Archbishop Laud. The delicate fan tracery of the roof, of earlier date, contrasts with the heavy ornamentation of the exterior.



A CORBEL ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE NAVE OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, OXFORD

The twisted columns of the porch are surmounted by a statue of the Virgin crowned, with the Child in her arms. This statue gave such offence to the Puritans that they included it in the articles of impeachment against the archbishop. The heads of the Virgin and Child were shattered by pistol-shots fired by Parliamentarian troops, 1642. They were restored after the return of Charles II.

That "memorable fabrick," as Wood calls it, the "Old Congregation House," on the north side of the chancel, belongs rather to the history of the University. It was claimed in 1409 as having been the property of the University from time immemorial, and the building wherein the Congregation of Masters had always been held. It consists of two apartments, one above the other. The lower is formed of four bays, vaulted and groined in stone. An upper storey was added later, in which was housed "a fayre library."

The ancient entrance to this upper storey is still to be traced, walled up, in a broad pier on the south side. After the removal of the University library to the new library founded by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the upper chamber was used as another Congregation House, the two being distinguished as the Upper and Lower House of Congregation.

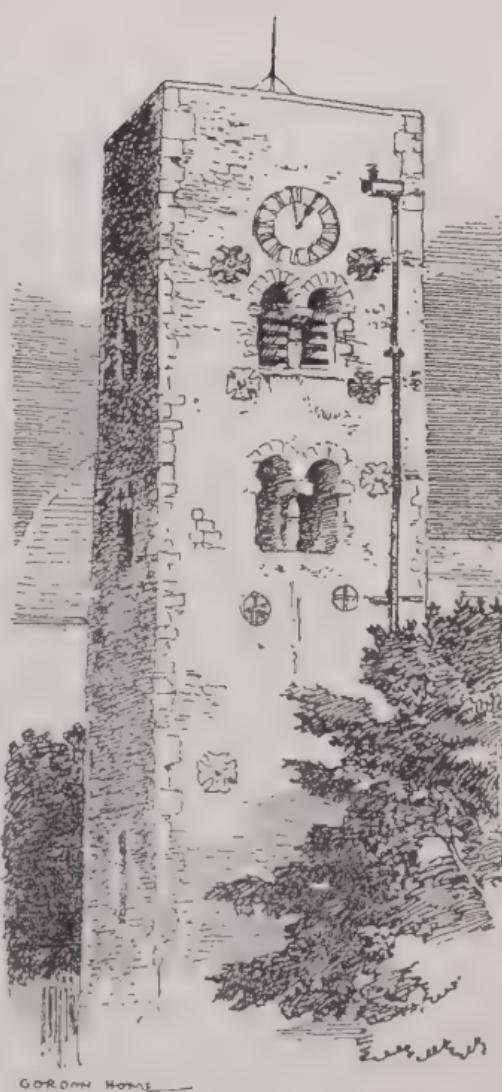
Of the many historical scenes connected with the University which St. Mary's has witnessed, none is more poignant than that which took place in 1560, when the remains of Amy Robsart were buried here "with great pompe and solemnity." Amy Robsart, wife of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, lover of Queen Elizabeth and Chancellor of Oxford, was found dead at the foot of the staircase at Cumnor Place. After the inquest her body was brought to Gloucester Hall, and lay there till, by Leicester's orders, it was brought to St. Mary's and buried in the choir. The funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Francis Babington, Leicester's chaplain. He, fumbling for a phrase to express her violent death, "tript once or twice by recommending to his auditors the virtues of that Lady, so pitifully *murdered*." The story ran that, in pursuance of instructions from Leicester, she was strangled and flung down the stairs and broke her neck. Leicester stood to gain by her death, which would leave him free to marry Elizabeth. Scott used this story in *Kenilworth*, but it is not supported by evidence, and was probably the invention of political enemies. The unhappy lady either met with an accident or committed suicide.

ST. MICHAEL'S AND ST. PETER'S IN THE EAST

After the Conquest, William assigned to one Robert d'Oilly the task of subduing Oxfordshire and restoring order therein. D'Oilly had come over in his train from Normandy, and the Conqueror made him "Constable," or governor, of Oxford. He was a man well chosen for his task, a typical Norman baron, ruthless, yet superstitious, strong to conquer and strong to hold. Very much the rough, marauding soldier, no doubt, but endowed with an instinct for government and order. He married Ealdgytha, the daughter and heiress of Wigod the Saxon, Lord of Wallingford and Cupbearer to Edward the Confessor. The Domesday survey shows that he held fifty manors, thirty-four of which were in Oxfordshire. Many of these, no doubt, came to him through his marriage. A Wigod d'Oilly, it is interesting to note, was the second prior of Oseney Abbey. D'Oilly at once set about repairing the rude fortifications of the town and building one of those stern castles by which William made fast his hold upon the river. The grim tower of St. George survives to show us how well he built, as also the adjacent crypt of the church of St. George, the four dwarf pillars of which should be compared with those of the crypt of St. Peter's in the East, which we shall shortly visit.

But first we must turn to the remarkable tower of St. Michael's Church. It was built by d'Oilly, half as a detached campanile, half as a fortress tower to guard the North Gate of the town. The adjoining

church is a later addition, chiefly of the XIVth century. But as d'Oilly built the detached tower projecting from the city wall, it was intended to serve a military as well as a spiritual purpose. Its defensive character is indicated by the round-headed doorway, some thirty feet from the ground on the north side. The purpose of this doorway would be to give access to a lower gallery guarding the approach to the adjoining gateway. On the south side of the tower are traces of another doorway, the base of which was about twelve feet from the ground. Probably this doorway was the means of communication between the tower and the rampart of the city wall or *vallum*, whilst a third door,



THE ROMANESQUE TOWER OF
ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH,
OXFORD

Its walls are of rubble with "long-and-short" work at the angles.

72 St. Michael's and St. Peter's

on the west side level with the street, formed the entrance from the road to the basement storey of the tower.

Architecturally, the tower may be said to be a connecting-link between the Romanesque styles which preceded and followed the Norman Conquest. The system of rubble with long-and-short work at the angles has not yet given place to that of surface ashlar masonry throughout, and the eight pilaster windows, it should be observed, of rude stone-work carved with the axe, present the plain, pierced arches, with midwall shafts, which preceded the splayed Norman window and arches with orders duly recessed.

Concerning the guardian churches of the gates of Oxford, an old couplet says:

Invigilat portæ australi boreæque Michael,
Exortum solem Petrus regit atque cadentem.

(At North Gate and at South Gate too St. Michael guards the way,

While o'er the East and o'er the West St. Peter holds his sway.)

The military purpose which the church of "St. Peter within the East Gate" shared with that of St. Michael is indicated by the two turrets at the east end. There were small openings in these, whence watch could be kept over the streams and approaches to the East Gate.

This church also, amongst many other churches in Oxford which he founded or repaired, was probably built by Robert d'Oilly. In order to obtain funds wherewith to build his castle and repair the fortifications

of Oxford, William's castellan had been obliged to be a hard taskmaster. He had trebled the taxation of the town, and pillaged without scruple the religious houses of the neighbourhood. At length, however, his conscience was touched, and from a builder of forts he became a founder of churches.

The story of his conversion is told in the Chronicle of Abingdon Abbey:

"In his greed for gain," says the chronicler, "he did everywhere harass the churches, and especially the abbey of Abingdon. Amongst other evil deeds he appropriated for the use of the castle garrison a meadow that lay outside the walls of Oxford, and belonged to the abbey. Touched to the quick, the brethren assembled before their altar and cried to Heaven for vengeance. Meantime, whilst day and night they were thus calling upon the Blessed Mary, Robert fell into a grievous sickness, in which he continued many days impenitent, until one night he dreamed that he stood within the palace of a certain great king. And before a glorious lady who was seated upon a throne there knelt two of the monks whose names he knew, and they said, 'Lady, this is he who seizes the lands of your church.' After which words were uttered she turned herself with great indignation towards Robert and commanded him to be thrust out of doors, and to be led to the meadow. And two youths made him sit down there, and a number of ruffianly lads piled burning hay round him and made sport of him. Some tossed haybands in his face and others singed his beard and the like. His wife, seeing that he was sleeping heavily, woke him up, and on his narrating

to her his dream, she urged him to go to Abingdon and restore the meadow. To Abingdon therefore he caused his men to row him, and there before the altar he made satisfaction."

Tradition and probability are somewhat at variance as regards the history of St. Peter's in the East. Tradition would have us believe that it is one of the oldest churches in the country; and that it was the first stone building in these parts, so that people came from hundreds of miles to marvel at it. Also that it was built by Grimbald, a learned French monk who was appointed to be one of the professors of the University by King Alfred. Grimbald, as Anthony Wood tells the tale, "therein in a vault under the chancell thought to have laid his bones; but upon some discontent tooke away his tombe, that he had provided for himselfe, and retired to Winchester Abbey." The crypt is therefore called Grimbald's Crypt. An underground passage is said to have connected it with St. Neot's Hall, upon the site of New College.

In fact, the church was probably built by Robert d'Oilly. Passing by escheat to the Crown, the advowson was granted by Henry III. to Merton College (1266). As we have it, the chancel and the nave are mainly of the xiith century, and with the south doorway afford remarkably rich examples of the Late Norman style. St. Peter's is said to derive its name from S. Pietro in Vincoli—St. Peter in Chains—a church in Rome boasting possession of the chains worn by St. Peter. The curious groining of the chancel roof, depicting St. Peter's chain and the keys of

St. Peter, with the swords of St. Paul, over the choir, recall this nomenclature.

The Lady Chapel, north of the chancel, is thought to have been built by St. Edmund of Abingdon. Here he is said to have heard mass daily before proceeding to give his lectures to the University. The north aisle (St. Thomas Becket) dates from the XIVth century; the porch and parvise over it from the XVth. The tower, which is out of line with the church, is Early Decorated, though the base may belong to an earlier period. Part of the old polygon font is preserved in the porch. Two beautiful Decorated windows and the Early English arcade of the nave are other noteworthy features in a church noteworthy in itself.

But all these details fade to insignificance before the so-called Grimbald's Crypt.

The entrance to this remarkable crypt is from the outside, through an iron gateway leading down some steps beneath a buttress in the south wall of the chancel.

With the aid of candles provided by the custodian of the keys of the church, we descend these steps and find ourselves in a crypt, the vaulting of which is composed of semicircular arches of hewn stone. The floor has been raised by the accumulation of the dust and leaves and flaking stone in the course of centuries, but it has been dug out round the pillars. These sturdy pillars have capitals of a peculiar design, and four of the bases are ornamented with spurs formed by the heads of lizard-shaped reptiles. A dragon, one of the signs used to denote Christianity, can clearly be traced upon one of them.

Holy Communion is celebrated in this crypt on the Sunday after St. Peter's Day (29th June).



THE NORMAN ROMANESQUE CRYPT OF THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER
IN THE EAST AT OXFORD

Whether this crypt, as we now have it, dates entirely from d'Oilly's time is a moot point. It may be that it does, but the actual masonry, it will be noticed—the

ashlar work, capitals and arches—are superior to that of the castle and St. Michael's. The plan of the original crypt of St. George's in the castle shows that it had, in accordance with the general rule of xith-century work in this country, an apsidal termination. The crypt of St. Peter's, as built in d'Oilly's day, was, it is suggested, no exception. It had an apsidal termination which did not extend so far towards the east as the present construction. But, as happened again and again in the history of innumerable churches and cathedrals at home and abroad—of Chartres, Rochester, Canterbury, for instance—the crypt was presently extended eastwards. The extension in the present case would enable the small apse to be changed into a larger choir with a rectangular east end. The result is that, looking eastwards and noticing that there is no apparent break between the wall of the crypt and the wall of the chancel above, which evidently belongs to the middle of the xiith century, you would be inclined to attribute the whole crypt to that date if you did not notice the small doorways on either side and at the western end. Looking westward, you see work which carries you back to the days when St. Michael's and the castle were being built. For the three western arches, two of them doorways now blocked up and the central one open, indicate a type of crypt which is generally held not to have been used later than the beginning of the xiith century. The essential features of this type were that the vault of the crypt was raised some feet above the level of the floor of the nave, and that both from the north and south side of the nave steps led down into the crypt.

78 St. Michael's and St. Peter's

And in some cases there were central steps as well, or at least some opening from the nave. Here then, as at Repton, you have indications of this type, for behind each of the blocked-up doorways is a passage leading to some steps or clear traces of steps, and the central archway may have provided originally an opening to the nave, through which a shrine may have been visible, or else a communication by central steps.¹

¹ *Story of Oxford*, pp. 47, 48. Mediæval Towns Series (Dent).

CHAPTER V

SOME COLLEGE CHAPELS

Ghe churches we have mentioned are those which, historically and architecturally, are the most interesting in Oxford. It is not possible, within the compass of this book, to refer to them all, or to all the chapels of the many colleges. We must content ourselves with a brief visit to those which exemplify the typical characteristics of a college chapel.

MERTON CHAPEL

When Walter de Merton, Chancellor of Henry III. and opponent of Simon de Montfort, conceived his idea of founding a college for the education of secular students within the University, he set an example which determined the future constitution of Oxford and Cambridge. One of his first steps was to appropriate the parish church of St. John the Baptist and to rebuild it as a collegiate church. The high altar was dedicated in the year of his death, 1277. The transepts were not finished till 1424. The massive tower, with its soaring pinnacles, a fine specimen of Perpendicular work, was not completed till 1451. There are many brasses and much glass of great

interest, notably that of the XIIIth century in the geometrical window of the chancel. It was no doubt intended originally to add a nave, as two blocked arches in the western wall and the construction of the west window indicate. But before it was taken in hand, William of Wykeham had finished his naveless chapel at New College, and the arrangement adopted by that great builder became the accepted type for all subsequent collegiate buildings.

NEW COLLEGE

William was the son of a carpenter at Wickham, who, after obtaining some education at a grammar school, entered the king's service and was presently promoted to be supervisor of the works at Windsor. He soon proved himself to be not only an architect of genius, but also an excellent man of business. The school and cathedral at Winchester, and the castle at Windsor, bear witness to his genius as a builder. Great as a builder of castles, he was great also as an administrator. The king rewarded his diligence and aptitude for affairs with the gift of many benefices. He was appointed Bishop of Winchester and Chancellor of England. In 1370 he set himself to found a college wherein secular priests might be trained who should strengthen and reform the Church. In forming his scheme, he borrowed and improved upon an idea which had been used by Robert Eglesfield in his foundation of Queen's College¹ thirty years before. He established a separate school for young scholars

¹ The chapel was designed by Sir Christopher Wren.



Gillman & Co.

THREE OF THE SEVEN WINDOWS DESIGNED BY SIR JOSHUA
REYNOLDS IN THE CHAPEL OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
The subjects are the Seven Virtues, beginning from the left
with Charity.

at Winchester, who should pass on to Oxford at the age of fifteen, and there become students of St. Mary, his "New" College. From Merton he borrowed and elaborated the rules drawn up for the regulation of that society; and from Merton he adopted and systematised the scheme of collegiate buildings which had there grown up in haphazard fashion. The plan as it issued from the orderly mind of this great architect consisted of a tower-gateway, chapel, hall, library, treasury, warden's lodgings, chambers, cloister-cemetery, kitchen and domestic offices designed and comprised in one self-sufficing quadrangle (1380-1400). The hall and chapel are under one roof. The chapel consists of a choir suitable to the needs of a small congregation, and of a nave of two bays, stopping short at the transepts, and thus forming an ante-chapel, which might serve both as a vestibule and as a room for lectures and disputations.

The lovely chapels of Magdalen, All Souls and Wadham directly imitate William of Wykeham's design. Architecturally, the chapel dominates the quadrangle, and its importance reminds us of the ecclesiastical aspect of the foundation, which the great opponent of Wycliffe intended to train secular priests of ability who should revitalise the Church.

The north-west corner of Wykeham's ante-chapel is one of the loveliest nooks in all ecclesiastical architecture. Superb soaring arches are lit by exquisite XIVth-century glass set in windows which afford a very early example of Perpendicular, retaining, as is natural, many Decorated features. The original glazing is arranged in all except the central western

window. The glass is beautiful in colour and harmonious in tone, but the design lacks something in clearness. It depicts saints, prophets and scenes from the Old and New Testaments. Upon a scroll along the lower tiers of lights is repeated the founder's legend, *Orate pro Willelmo de Wykeham episcopo fundatore istius collegii* (Pray for William of Wykeham, Bishop, and Founder of this College). (The reader who seeks further details should consult a paper by Mr. Winston in the *Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute* for 1854.)

THE REYNOLDS WINDOW. The great central west window is composed of two tiers of seven lights apiece and a head of tracery. It is flanked by two smaller windows.

The seven lights are filled with portraits representing the seven virtues. They were copied, in 1777, by Mr. Jervais from cartoons designed by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Extraordinarily beautiful in pose, colour, feeling, and draughtsmanship are these portraits of English womanhood. It must be admitted that they are an instance of art, and great art, misapplied. The first condition of the glazier's art is that he should build up a window with pieces of coloured glass, adapting his material to the light and shape of its environment, and providing shade and background in accordance with the transparency of his medium. He should, in fact, paint *in* glass, not *on* glass. Merely to apply a painted picture to glass is to invite disaster. But this defect being admitted, here let it be forgotten and forgiven for a moment, so that we may enjoy unalloyed the exquisite pleasure arising from the exceeding loveliness of Sir Joshua Reynolds' cartoons.

Sixteen choristers were attached to the foundation by William of Wykeham, thanks to whom the choral service at New College rivals—it cannot excel—that at Magdalen.

In the chapel itself much of the glass in the tracery of the north windows is original XIVth-century. The south windows, dating from the late XVth and early XVIth centuries, are by Flemish artists. There is also some old glass, repainted in parts and mingled with XVIIth-century work by W. Price in 1740. An inscription on the first window from the east records that the glass of the lower lights in the northern windows was painted by W. Peckitt in 1765. In colour, draughtsmanship, shading and design they are as much inferior to the windows of the south side as those are to the windows of the ante-chapel.

Having drunk our fill of the beauties of New College, Magdalen and All Souls, it will be of interest to turn our steps towards Wadham.

WADHAM COLLEGE

Wadham College was founded by Dame Dorothy Wadham. The chapel, hall and quadrangle were built in the years 1610–13. The general character of the quadrangle, it will be observed, is similar to that of the Divinity School. The tower, gateway and oriel window are in the same relative positions and Elizabethan in style. But the hall and ante-chapel are of somewhat different character, the windows, notably the large window of the hall, having debased tracery

of scroll-work. But the interesting thing is that the chapel, though contemporaneous, is totally different in style from the rest of the buildings. So marked is this difference that the erroneous belief has been entertained that it is of an earlier date, or that it is composed of materials derived from the Augustinian convent upon whose site the college is erected. Except in a few details, it is a fine Perpendicular building. The tracery and mouldings of the windows are mainly good, though late, Perpendicular. The east window and the two lofty arches which divide the ante-chapel from the transept evidently derived their inspiration from New College, as did the windows of the chapel of Exeter College (1624).

The rest of the ante-chapel is blended in style with the hall, and forms a link with the domestic architecture of the quadrangle and the ecclesiastical architecture of the chapel.

It would seem then that the foundress was influenced by two ideas: first, that New College was the perfect type of collegiate architecture; and secondly, that a building intended to be used for divine service should have a character different from those devoted to domestic uses, and that the style of architecture suitable for such ecclesiastical purposes was essentially that Gothic which was going out of fashion indeed, but of which she could behold so many beautiful examples around her.

It was for these reasons, perhaps, that the use of Gothic persisted in Oxford so much later than elsewhere. Its persistence is exemplified in the chapels of Lincoln (1631) and Oriel (1637), and University



THE LATE NORMAN ARCHES IN IFFLEY CHURCH
The pulpit and other features as they appeared in 1834.
From a drawing by F. Mackenzie engraved by J. Le Keux.

to be found in the curious mixture of styles in the chapel at Brasenose (1656-66), where the exterior of the chapel is Corinthian, with pointed windows inserted between the pilasters, and the oval form is introduced in the tracery of the east and west windows. Its design is attributed to Wren. The roof of this chapel does not belong to this late period, for it was taken from the chapel of St. Mary's College (1435). It is a kind of hammer-beam with beautiful fan vaulting above. This kind of vaulting was justly popular at Oxford, and its use continued very late. It is frequently found under gateways, as at Wadham, St. John's, and University, and, as we have seen, at Christ Church.

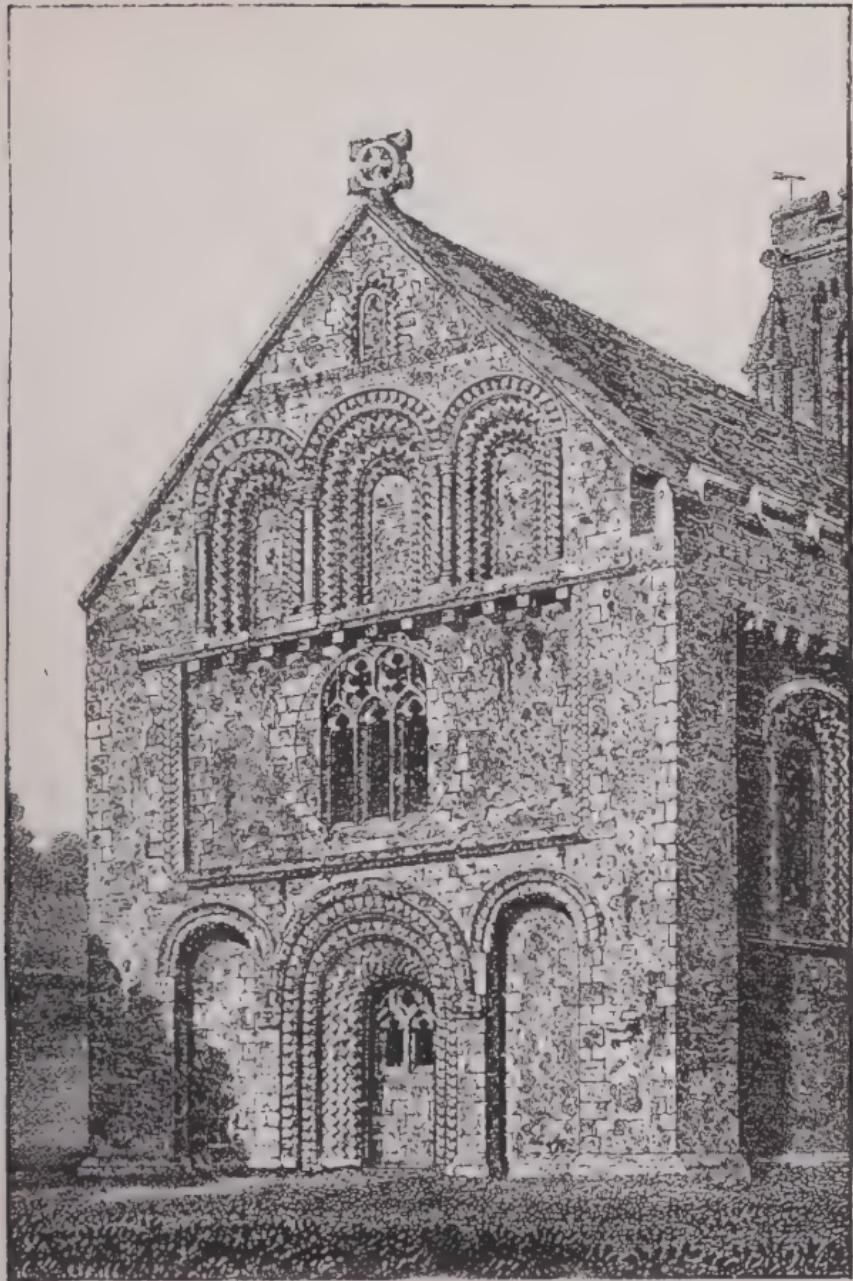
CHAPTER VI

MONASTIC AND OTHER CHURCHES NEAR OXFORD

IFFLEY CHURCH

It is impossible to conceive anything more rich and magnificent in the pure Norman style than those parts of the church of St. Mary the Virgin which remain intact at Iffley, two miles south of Oxford. The old grey church, which was built about 1160, stands upon a green slope rising from the river above the famous weir and lock, which are now being reconstructed with artistic care.

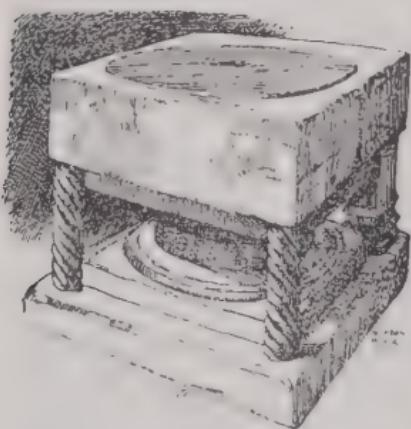
The shade of a fine cedar and of a vast and ancient yew tree, as old, it is said, as the church itself, shrouds the south side, on which there is a fine doorway with rose mouldings. On the capitals are knights engaged in combat with centaurs. The north doorway is also fine. But it is the magnificent west doorway, deeply recessed and lavishly ornamented, which chiefly commands attention. It consists of six superimposed orders: four arches with moulding of zigzag pattern, and two twisted columns ornamented with rich and varied beak-heads. The drip-stone is decorated with signs of the zodiac and emblems of the Evangelists. The absence of capitals is noteworthy. The massive tower is somewhat low and not so highly ornamented, yet impressive.



THE WEST FRONT OF IFFLEY CHURCH BEFORE THE RESTORATION

It shows Perpendicular windows in the doorway, and in place of the original circular opening now restored.

The richness of the western doorway prepares us for the splendour of the scene within. True, it is but an aisleless Norman nave with a chancel of two bays, and Decorated and Perpendicular windows have ousted the Norman save at the west end, where a rose window was restored in 1860. The glass is atrocious. But the Norman arches beneath the tower give an effect



THE ROMANESQUE FONT IN
IFFLEY CHURCH

It consists of a plain block of black marble supported by a central pedestal and four corner shafts.

may have been prolonged when the eastern bay was built in the Early English style, some time before the middle of the thirteenth century, as the broad lancet windows indicate.

The very splendour of the Norman nave would seem to demonstrate that on these lines the artist could no further go. The next development must be College (1640). The last expiring traces of Gothic are

of grandeur and magnificence unsurpassable in this style. Plain capitals enhance the richness of the arch mouldings, and the ornamentation of round arch succeeding round arch leads the eye to the dim religious light of the recesses of the apse. Four black octagonal shafts, inserted in the four angles of the tower arches, strike an unexpected note.

The western bay of the chancel is also Norman. The original church may have ended in an apse, or

in the direction of the pointed arch, of the light and soaring Gothic style, of slender grace and delicate tracery, of pinnacle and pilaster. Here then, raised by four steps above the level of the Norman chancel, was erected an eastern bay in the Early English style, very beautiful after its kind, where the plain, light ribs of the vaulting afford a charming contrast with the heavy, ornamented groining-ribs of the Norman bay.

The sedilia, piscina and ambry, of the same date, are very fine. It remains to notice the rood-loft staircase, recently opened, and, in the west end, a large Norman font, the bowl of which is formed of black marble similar to that of the shafts in the tower piers.

In the rectory adjoining the church to the south there are some interesting features, including an Early English window in an internal wall.

GODSTOW

Godstow—about three miles from Eynsham—is a pleasant spot, and the Trout Inn, with the lasher and old bridge, is attractive to anglers and lovers of the picturesque. But the architectural remains of the famous nunnery are not sufficient to justify an excursion thither. A portion of the boundary walls and the ruin of a domestic building of the xvth century at one corner of it, a blocked-up doorway and a few Perpendicular mouldings, etc., are all that survive of the sanctuary where Fair Rosamund, the Rose of all the World, ended her life. Godstow was founded

by Edith, widow of Sir William Launcelene. The church was dedicated in 1139. Rosamund, the mistress of King Henry II., was the sister of Walter, Lord Clifford, a benefactor of the nunnery. The story that she was poisoned by Queen Eleanor, with the corroborative details of the dagger and the cup, is a modern invention. She died a natural death about the year 1175, and was buried before the high altar at Godstow; her royal lover lavished money on her tomb. Over it was written the couplet:

Hic jacet in tumba Rosa mundi, non rosa munda,
Non redolet, sed olet, quæ redolere solet.

(Rose of all the World's sweet roses, Fair Rosamund lies here;
Fair and sweet is she no longer, who was so sweet and fair.)

Her tomb so placed began to attract worshippers, who soon treated it almost as a sacred shrine. The visiting bishop in 1191 was so scandalised that he ordered the body to be removed and buried outside.

It was reported by the royal visitors of 1538 that the abbey was strictly conducted, and that most of the young gentlewomen of the neighbouring country were sent there to be educated. It was suppressed in the following year, the abbess and sisters receiving generous pensions.

WOODSTOCK

It was at Woodstock, where Henry I. had built himself a magnificent royal mansion and enclosed a spacious park seven miles round, that, according to the legend, Henry II. concealed the fair Rosamund

Clifford from his jealous consort, Queen Eleanor. With this object, it is said, he built in the palace a labyrinth provided with the most intricate windings and turnings. All traces of it were destroyed during the Civil War. But under an old wall a paved bath or spring still goes by the name of Rosamund's Well, and a site in the park, on the south-west side of the palace, is known as her "bower" or chamber.

The park is said by John Rous, the chronicler, to have been the first in England to be enclosed by a stone wall. He adds, with less probability, that several villages were destroyed to provide stones for it. Henry I. not only enjoyed Woodstock as a hunting resort, but used it as a sort of Zoological Garden, where he kept all sorts of strange animals, "begging with great delight from foreign kings lions, leopards, lynxes and camels," as William of Malmesbury records. As to the labyrinth, or maze, within which "Rosamund's Bower" is said to have been hidden by Henry II. from the jealous eyes of the queen, it should be remarked that mazes, constructed of brick, stone or clipped hedges, or merely cut in the turf, formed a common feature of pleasure-grounds in the Middle Ages.

It was at the Chace of Woodstock that the first quarrel between those two fiery and domineering men, Henry II. and Thomas Becket, is said to have occurred. It was proposed that a certain tax, hitherto paid to the sheriffs, should henceforth be paid to the Crown. The archbishop raised objections. The king was furious at being crossed by his former minister. "By God's eyes," he cried, "the money shall be paid as revenue, and registered in the king's books!" "And

by God's eyes," retorted Becket, equally angry, "while I live, from land of mine no such payment shall be made of the Church's right, no, not one penny!"

The presence of the Court made Woodstock an important place in the county. King John was born there, and added Langley in Wychwood Forest as an additional royal hunting-lodge. Woodstock returned two members to Parliament from Edward I.'s time onwards. It claims to have been the birthplace of Geoffrey Chaucer, the poet. A modernised house in Woodstock Street is known as Chaucer's House. But there is no evidence to show that the poet was born or lived at Woodstock, though he may well have visited it, seeing that he was attached to the Court. (See Ewelme.)

Queen Elizabeth was confined at Woodstock by Mary in 1554. The palace had by this time fallen into a ruinous condition, and Elizabeth and her guard suffered much from the cold and wet. She pined in her confinement, and one day, hearing a milkmaid singing, "wished herself a milkmaid, saieing that her case was better and life more merier than was hers."

She is said to have written with a piece of burnt wood on a shutter:

Oh Fortune! how thy restlesse wavering state
Hath fraught with cares my troubled witt!
Witness this present prison whither Fate
Could beare me and the joys I quitt.
Thou causedst the guiltie to be losed
From bandes wherein are innocents inclosed:



THE LATE NORMAN WEST DOOR OF IFFLEY CHURCH
Before the Restoration it was filled with a Perpendicular window.

Causing the guiltles to be straight reserved
And freeing those that death hath well deserved.
But by her envie can be nothing wroughte,
So God send to my foes all they have thoughte.

Elizabeth Prisoner.

Another day her spirits rose, and she cut with a diamond "on a glasse window verie legiblie":

Much suspected of me
Nothing proved can be.

Quoth Elizabeth Prisoner.

As queen, Elizabeth made Woodstock a staple of wool, and received upon her numerous visits there, like other royal visitors, the present of a pair of richly embroidered gloves. For glove-making was and is the chief industry of the little town, which was once famous also for fine wrought-iron and steel work.

The palace was used as a place of residence or hunting-box by most kings to James II. It was garrisoned by Charles I. as one of the outlying defences of Oxford, and surrendered to the Parliament on 26th April, 1646. The commissioners who took possession of it were frightened away by the tricks of a humorous Royalist, Joe Collins, the "Just Devil of Woodstock," who played upon their fears of the supernatural. Scott utilised the incident in *Woodstock* to expose the machinery of "spooks."

The palace had fallen into ruins by 1704, when the honour and manor of Woodstock were granted to John, Duke of Marlborough, and the magnificent palace of Blenheim was built by Sir John Vanbrugh, at the expense of the nation, "as a monument of

his glorious actions.”¹ The church of Woodstock, which has been much spoiled, was once a chapel of ease to Bladon. It is now in the gift of the Duke of Marlborough.

The original part of the building is the south aisle, which is Late Early English, with a rich Norman doorway. The five Early English arches of the arcade on the south side rest on plain round pillars with octagonal bases. The capitals have stiff-stalk foliage, interspersed between grotesque heads, said to be “the earliest example of a feature common in north Oxfordshire” (Brabant). The clerestory, rood-screen and west porch are Perpendicular; the west door, with a good suite of mouldings, the roll, ogee and hollow, and the labels terminated by heads, is Decorated. So also is the west window, which has five lights with quatrefoils in the head, and the arch flat, segmental, pointed, with a plain label terminated by heads.² The font is a beautiful piece of Decorated work, and the piscina in the south aisle is noteworthy. There are two brasses, bearing date 1431 and 1631.

¹ The park is always open to pedestrians. The palace may be seen on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 13th May–18th September, from one to four p.m., on payment of 2s. Tickets at the porter’s lodge.

The vast building, impressive by its size rather than design, was begun in 1705, and can never fail to recall the satirical epitaph composed for the architect by Dr. Abel Evans:

“Lie heavy on him, earth, for he
Laid many a heavy load on thee.”

² *Guide to the Architectural Antiquities in the neighbourhood of Oxford.*

EYNSHAM — COGGES — WITNEY — MINSTER LOVELL
— ASTHALL — BURFORD — BAMPTON — ABING-
DON — DORCHESTER — EWELME

Of the great group of religious houses in the Oxford district, Eynsham, Abingdon, St. Frideswide's, Oseney and Rewley, we have now dealt with the three last. The first four, and Dorchester, were all established before the death of King Stephen in 1154.

EYNSHAM

Oxford, owing to its position commanding the valley of the Upper Thames, its accessibility by water, and its importance as the meeting-place of the two main roads of the district, running east and west, and north and south, soon outstripped rival towns such as Abingdon and Wallingford. But the priory of St. Frideswide was easily surpassed in importance by the monasteries of Abingdon and Eynsham.

Eynsham lies due south of Woodstock, some six miles west of Oxford, on the Witney and Burford road. Skirting Wytham Wood (on the right) the road crosses the Thames by the picturesque and narrow Swinford Bridge a mile before Eynsham is reached. The view of the river, silently winding its way, serpent fashion, through the flat water-meadows fringed with pollarded willows, is very attractive, and may compensate the hurrying motorists for being held up by the toll-bar at the bridgehead. Old thatched houses, overgrown with moss, line the road and herald the approach to the little town.

The Benedictine abbey of Eynsham was founded in 1005 by Æthelmar the Ealdorman, who, having endowed it with the manors of Eynsham, Yarnton, Shipton, and other lands, behaved, as we are told, like a father to the monks he established there.¹ The monks fled and the abbey was deserted at the time of the Norman Conquest, but was shortly afterwards refounded by Remigius, Bishop of Lincoln. In Domesday Book it is credited with holding one church in Oxford (? St. Ebbe's) and thirteen houses.

When Bishop Remigius transferred his see from Dorchester to Lincoln, he moved the monastery of Eynsham to Stow, but under his successor, Robert Bloet (1093), the monks returned to their old home. Eynsham can thus "claim to be the one religious house in Oxfordshire which existed continuously from the xith century to the dissolution of the monasteries" (Salter, p. xii).

The neighbourhood of the Court at Woodstock, where Henry I. had established his park and residence, combined with the position of Eynsham on the main road from London to Wales, made the abbey an important resting-place for travellers. Their presence indeed, and the duties of hospitality involved thereby, often taxed the resources of the foundation to the uttermost.

Adam, Abbot of Eynsham (1214-28), and famous as the author of the *Life of St. Hugh*, has described in his *Vision of Edmund* a remarkable revelation of the next world beheld in a trance by a monk of Eynsham in 1196. This vision has more than local interest, for

¹ *Eynsham Cartulary* (edited by Rev. H. E. Salter), p. 20.



WITNEY CHURCH FROM THE NORTH

The fine Early English spire repeats on finer lines that of
Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.

it was known to Dante, and inspired some of the details of the *Divina Commedia*.

The monastery was dissolved in 1539. The manors and property belonging to the abbey were granted by Henry VIII. to Edward, Lord North, in 1543. Anthony Kitchen, the last abbot, was appointed Bishop of Llandaff.

Only the site of this famous Benedictine monastery is now traceable in a meadow south-west of the church. The church stands in a tiny piazza off the main road, behind the market-house, near to which is the base and shaft of what must once have been a magnificent (Early Decorated) cross. With the exception of the south aisle and chancel, which are Early Decorated, the church is in the Perpendicular style of an early period. The octagonal piers which carry the pointed and recessed arches of the nave are of a peculiar though not quite unique design. Each face is fluted, and octagonal shafts are attached to the piers. Moulded capitals surmount both shafts and piers. Another unusual feature of this church is the position of the tower, which is situated at the west end of the north aisle, that is, at the north-west corner of the building. The large belfry windows have three lights. The stair-turret, attached to the north-east angle, is square below and octagonal above. The north porch has a parvise over it. A curious feature here is the sideways entrance within the porch leading to the bell-tower. The good Perpendicular font is raised on three steps. Besides a brass plate to Edward Stanley of the year 1632, there are some fragments of old glass (? Flemish), and some old rough-hewn oaken pews. Three brasses

commemorate (1) William Emott, Vicar, 1584; (2) Richard Martin, 1617; and (3) Michael Martin, 1610:

What man he was lies buried here,
His name ingraven playne upon this stone behould,
Whose sole in Heaven wee hope doth rest, though body sleepe
in mould,
Michael Martyne of Evsham yeoman.

COGGES

Just before reaching Witney, which is eleven miles west of Oxford, we pass a group of buildings—church, manor-house and vicarage—among the water-meadows of the Windrush. This is Cogges. Parts of the manor-house, which contains some fine Early English work, must have been built before the close of the XIIIth century. The manor was one of the many acquired by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, at the time of the Conquest. From him it passed to the Oxfordshire family of De Arsic, of whose castle the moat and foundations can be traced. When that family died out, the manor was bought by the De Greys of Yorkshire in the middle of the XIIIth century. It now belongs to the Harcourt family. Here an alien priory, a small religious house, was founded by William de Arsic in 1103, in honour of the Blessed Trinity. It was given by him to the great Benedictine abbey of Fécamps.

The vicarage is formed out of part of the conventional buildings. The property of the monks passed eventually to Eton College.

The church of Cogges is interesting because, in its details and architecture, it shows clearly the influence of the French monks to whom the house belonged.

The little tower, with its octagonal roof at the north-west corner, and the flamboyant tracery of the windows are instances of this. The church was altered late in the Decorated period, when the Perpendicular style was creeping in. A rich Decorated tomb, with a female effigy, is attributed to the De Grey family. Another tomb is that of William Blake, who died in 1695.

WITNEY

To this William Blake, "Armiger of Coggs, 1683," as the inscription reminds us, Witney owes the fascinating Butter Cross. The structure is built upon thirteen round pillars, and is surmounted by a small lantern containing a clock. It lies just off the main thoroughfare, a fine broad street about which all the principal buildings of the town are grouped. Beyond the Butter Cross opens a broad, well-kept green, on the west of which, behind an avenue of elms, is the Grammar School (founded in 1663), and at the southern extremity of it, the imposing parish church.

At the south-east corner of the green is Mount House, a modern dwelling which has supplanted the ancient residence of the Bishops of Winchester. They held the manor and living of Witney before the Conquest. The occasion of their acquiring it is said to have been in this wise.

Emma, Queen of Æthelred and Cnut, was accused of having misconducted herself with her guardian, Alwyn, Bishop of Winchester. But she, confident of her innocence, purged herself of the slanderous tale



WITNEY CHURCH AND BUTTER CROSS

GORDON
HOME

by walking barefoot and unhurt over nine red-hot ploughshares. As a thankoffering, Witney and twenty other manors were presented by the Crown to the See of Winchester. A boundary-ditch near Witney, across the meadows in the direction of Ducklington, is known to-day as Emm's Ditch, and is supposed to mark the limit of the possessions thus won for the Church by the innocence and intrepidity of Queen Emma. It may be merely a drainage ditch, or perhaps Emm's Ditch is a corruption of Grim's Ditch and this dyke is one of the many pre-Roman earthworks thrown up as frontier lines by the tribes, and known as Grimsdikes.

Witney was early and long one of the most important towns in Oxfordshire. It returned burgesses to the parliaments of the first three Edwards. The industry by which it is still best known, blanket-weaving, was the most important industry of the county in the XVIITH century. It may be doubted whether the excellence of Witney blankets is due, as Dr. Plot suggested, to the waters of the Windrush which, he says, "being nitrous, have peculiar abstersive qualities." More probably the moisture-laden atmosphere of the Upper Thames valley is conducive to the process of weaving and handling wool, which would naturally be developed in the centre of a great wool-growing district. At any rate there were 150 looms, employing 3000 hands, at work in the XVIITH century, and a Blanket Hall and Weavers' Guild came into existence at the beginning of the XVIIIITH.

It is not surprising that a town of such importance should boast a magnificent parish church. Magnificent it is, by virtue of its position, its size, and the

lofty spire, which rises proudly at the end of the spacious green.

This church has been much added to and altered. The alterations and additions render the details something of an architectural and historical problem, and destroy that unity and simplicity of design which give the greatest pleasure to the artist's eye. Yet the whole is still of singular dignity and charm. The grouping of the aisles and nave and transepts, and the flowing tracery and gargoyles of the superb Decorated north window, combine with the perfect proportions of the massive belfry and graceful, soaring Early English spire to make an almost ideal picture of an English parish church.

This impression is enhanced by its setting amidst the close-cut turf and ancient cedars, yews and firs of a carefully-tended churchyard.

Of an earlier Norman church, which was replaced by the existing cruciform building in the XIIIth century, the chief remnant is the north doorway and porch, simple and severe (Transitional), over which a parvise has been added (Perpendicular, restored).

The deeply recessed niches on the (Decorated) buttresses of the north transept cannot fail to attract attention.

Of the Early English building which supplanted the original Norman church, the tower, spire and chancel remain intact. But the transepts would appear to have been altered and extended through the succeeding ages, with the result that they present a confusing mixture of the Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular styles.



IN MINSTER LOVELL CHURCH
Showing the remarkable arrangement of the piers supporting
the central tower.

The first impression produced by the interior of the church is that of grandeur and simplicity. A splendid open nave, with plain English arcading, is lit by large and lofty (Perpendicular) clerestory windows and a magnificent western window and doorway (also Perpendicular). This lighted space is closed by the lofty, simple, recessed archways of the transepts, and contrasts with the dim recesses of the chancel, lit by graceful lancet windows. The sense of majesty and awe conveyed by this combination is probably heightened by the disappearance of the numerous side-altars and chantry chapels, of which many traces can be perceived. Of those that remain, two contain memorials of the Wenman (or Waynman) family. The altar-tomb and brasses (1500) of Richard Waynman and his wives are in the small chapel west of the south transept aisle. North of the nave, approached by a fascinating ogee doorway, the Wenman Chapel, the details of which vary in style from Late Decorated to Late Perpendicular, holds upon its eastern wall a XVIIth-century Renaissance monument.

MINSTER LOVELL

From Witney to Burford the road follows the course of the Windrush. The plateau on the right between this river and the valley of the Evenlode was once covered by the vast royal forest of Wychwood. The magnificent woods and park of the Cornbury Park estate, near Charlbury, form but a fragment of this famous forest, which was broken up and sold in 1862.

Three miles out from Witney, the foundations of a priory will serve as an excuse for giving the traveller pause at the tiny village which thence derives its name—Minster Lovell, or Lovel. But a glimpse of the ruined manor-house and church, charmingly grouped above the river, easily reconciles one to taking out the clutch, even though the road may be under water, should it be the rainy season. Across the bridge and past a mill-house, a rustic street lined by cottages, whose heavily thatched roofs are overgrown with moss, leads up to the church. Beyond it are the remains of the manor-house, which was once defended by a moat. It now forms part of a farm.

The Lovels were one of the principal families of the Chiltern district. They settled here as early as 1107, and here Maud Lovel founded a priory about the year 1200, and gave it to the Norman abbey of Ivry. With other alien priories it was dissolved by Henry V. Possibly some of the old priory buildings were used in the construction of the great manor-house which William, Lord Lovel, built a few years later (1420–30), as well as the parish church adjoining. The church, St. Kenelm's, which is in the Perpendicular style throughout, has all the charm of a well-proportioned and uniform design. A peculiar but attractive effect is produced by the square piers which carry the vaulting of the central tower, for the western piers are wholly detached and the eastern partly detached from the side walls. A squint is thus left on either side, the openings of which are cinquefoiled. There are fragments of old glass in the west window and choir. Good, plain old oaken pews har-

monise with the simplicity of this attractive church. In the south transept a brass commemorates Henry Heylyn (1695).

A curious brass "acrostic" inscription spells the name of John Vampage, Deputy Sheriff of Worcestershire, 1428.

Verbum fons venie Vampage miserere Johannis
Ad regis causas attornati prius annis
Mater Virgo dei precor Elisabeth memorari
Prima que vita felix fuerat sibi nupta
Ambos hos turbe jungat deus atque beate
Gratis quo cernant ipsos qui jura gubernant
Et roget in celis maneant ut quisque fidelis.

(O Word and Fount of Grace, have mercy on John Vampage, formerly Attorney - General; O Virgin Mother of God, I pray thee to remember Elizabeth, who in her first youth was happily married to him, that God may unite them both to the blessed throng, that they may freely look upon those who control the laws, and that He may bid them abide in Heaven like all the faithful.)

Lastly, there is the splendid alabaster altar-tomb of the founder, William, Lord Lovel, dating from about 1430. The effigy is in coat of mail, with the small waist of the period, a finely carved sword in sheath on the left side, and a dagger on the right. The head rests on a tilting helmet, and the feet rest against a lion. The head is bare and the hands are closed in prayer upon the breast. The shields of his alliances are painted in gold and colours upon Perpendicular panels on the sides of the tomb.

This William, Lord Lovel, was the grandfather of Francis, who married an heiress of John, Lord

Deincourt, and was made a viscount in 1483 for his service with the Duke of Gloucester in Scotland.

He bore a sword at the coronation of his friend, Richard III., and was appointed Chamberlain of the Household and Constable of Wallingford. The well-known Lancastrian couplet:

The Cat, the Rat, and Lovel the Dog
Rule all England under the Hog,

satirises his influence in the Yorkist government. For the Lovel crest was a *talbot* hound *passant*, and a white boar was one of the badges of Richard. The Cat and Rat were Catesby and Ratcliffe. Lovel was particularly hated by the Lancastrians because, though a Lancastrian himself, he espoused the cause of Richard, "the Hog."

On the accession of Henry VII. Lovel was attainted, but he escaped to the Low Countries, and returned to fight for the Pretender, Lambert Simnel, at the Battle of Stoke (1487). There the last hopes of the Yorkists perished. Lovel himself was never seen again. But a mystery attached to his end which lends a thrill to these old ruins. According to one account, he was slain on the field of battle. But Bacon, in his *Life of Henry VII.*, writes: "Of the Lord Lovel there went a report that he fled and swam over Trent on horseback, but did not recover the further side, by reason of the steepness of the bank, and so was drowned in the river." But by a third account it was rumoured that he escaped and lived for many years afterwards in a cave or vault. It is very likely that the first and second of these reports were circulated in order to put hounds



A PERSPECTIVE OF PILLARS IN BURFORD CHURCH

Looking across the nave and aisles from the Sylvester Chapel.
This portion of the church was built in the Perpendicular period.

off the scent. At any rate, William Cowper, Clerk of Parliament in 1737, made a statement that the Duke of Rutland related in his hearing in 1728, that twenty years before, "upon occasion of new laying a chimney at Minster Lovell, there was discovered a large vault or room underground, in which was the entire skeleton of a man, as having been sitting at a table, which was before him, with a book, paper, ink, etc.; in another part of the room lay a cap, all much mouldered and decayed, which the family and others judged to be this Lord Lovel." Other accounts add that the clothing of the body was rich, and that the skeleton was supporting his head with one of his hands, the elbow resting on a table.

The tradition, then, is that, after the Battle of Stoke, Lord Lovel made his way back to his home by the Windrush, and there hid in a vaulted chamber of which only an old housekeeper knew the secret entrance. There she daily brought him food, until one day she came not. Death had laid his sudden hand upon her. She went with her secret untold; and her unfortunate master was left to die of slow starvation, facing his doom fast locked in the secret chamber of his refuge.

According to local tradition the castle at Minster Lovell was the scene of another tragedy recorded in the famous ballad, *The Mistletoe Bough*:

The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,
The holly bush shone on the old oak wall;
The baron's retainers were blithe and gay
Keeping their Christmas holiday.
The baron beheld with a father's pride

His beautiful child, Lord Lovell's bride;
While she with her bright eyes seemed to be
The star of that goodly company.

O, the Mistletoe Bough.

"I'm weary of dancing now," she cried,
"Here, tarry a moment, I'll hide, I'll hide;
And Lovell, be sure thou'rt first to trace
The clue to my secret hiding-place."
Away she went, and her friends began
Each tower to search and each nook to scan,
And young Lovell cried: "O, where dost thou hide?
I'm lonesome without thee, my own dear bride."

O, the Mistletoe Bough.

They sought her that night, and they sought her next day;
They sought her in vain till a week passed away.
In the highest, the lowest, the loneliest spot,
Young Lovell sought wildly, but found her not.
And years flew by, and their grief at last
Was told as a sorrowful tale long past.
And when Lovell appeared the children cried:
"See, the old man weeps for his fairy bride."

O, the Mistletoe Bough.

At length an old chest that had long lain hid,
Was found in the castle—they raised the lid;
And a skeleton form lay mouldering there
In the bridal wreath of a lady fair.
O, sad was her fate, in sportive jest,
She hid from her lord in the old oak chest.
It closed with a spring, and her bridal bloom
Lay withering there in a living tomb.

O, the Mistletoe Bough.

The great manor-house was not dismantled until
the middle of the xviiith century. Its vast and dis-
membered ruins, with the beautiful old church close

at hand, the grove of trees, the Windrush, and the old pointed bridge that crosses it, form to-day, as has been truly said,¹ one of the most beautiful groups of Oxfordshire scenery.

ASTHALL

The traveller whose nerve has been shaken by the grisly tale of Minster Lovell will make an uneasy journey of it to Burford. For about four miles from Witney Station the road descends sharply to Worsham Bottom, a haunted spot of the old coaching days, where on dark and stormy nights a little evil-faced figure, clad in black velvet and black hose, and known by the soubriquet of "Black Stockings," would suddenly spring out and grab at the horses' reins. Surviving this peril, perhaps, the traveller climbs up to Asthall Barrow, a remarkable ancient British tumulus crowning the down, and now marked by a dark clump of fir-trees. At this point a road branching off to the right leads to the village of Asthall, on the Windrush, a mile away, through which the great Roman road, Akeman Street, passes on its way from Aylesbury to Cirencester and Bath. This was a branch, probably a later branch, of Watling Street, the great north-western thoroughfare from London to Chester. Akeman Street ran from Tring and Aylesbury to Alchester, where it met two other Roman roads, that from Dorchester over Otmoor, and that from Bicester to Buckingham. The site of Alchester can just be traced

¹ Cf. Meade Falkner, *History of Oxfordshire*.

between Wendlebury and Bicester. Thence, after skirting Kirklington Park, Akeman Street ran through Wychwood Forest and, after crossing the Windrush at Asthall and scaling the hillside, passed across the Cheltenham road into Gloucestershire. Asthall is a charming village, the handsome Norman church grouping with a fine Elizabethan manor-house above a well-wooded slope stretching down to the Windrush. The architecture of the church is mainly Transitional, with subsequent Late Early English and Perpendicular alterations. The chancel arch is adorned with beak-heads. There is some old glass (North), and a curious old stone altar and piscina combined.

BURFORD AND ITS CHURCH

For two miles after leaving Asthall Barrow the road drops down towards Burford. The Windrush, winding serpent-wise beneath the downs upon the right, and woods, crowning the distant uplands beyond, enfold this little, ancient, much-loved town, whose spire is seen pointing skyward above the mist of the valley. Suddenly the road dips, dropping a couple of hundred feet down to the bed of the Windrush. This descent, steep for this flat district of far-ranging water-meadows and miniature mountains, is lined by the old houses of the broad High Street of Burford, which reclines, as it were, upon a lower slope of the Cotswolds. Its highest point is some 500 feet above sea-level.

Burford retains, almost unblemished, the peculiar



A DISTANT VIEW OF BURFORD FROM THE EAST
The willow-bordered Windrush is seen winding through its narrow valley.

charm of an English old-world town. Its long prosperity, lasting from the XIIIth to the XVIIIth century, was guided by a corporation which grew up in the absence of the lords of the manor. After relapsing into obscurity at the close of the coaching days, it has been re-discovered of late by lovers of things beautiful and typical of the English countryside.

The town owes its great charm to its wealth of XIVth-XVIth century domestic houses, and the absence of blots in the shape of modern villas and vulgarity. The rectory and many other very beautiful dwelling-houses, including the "Great House," are built of stone, and are Late Jacobean. The brick front of the Bull Inn probably belongs to the same date. The freestone quarries of Burford supplied material for the building of Christ Church at Oxford. To this stone, mellowing to grey and primrose yellow, or turning to a rich green in the moisture-laden atmosphere, and catching the lights and shadows of sunshine and cloud, the walls of Burford houses owe their warmth and colour.

Burford probably came into existence as a fortified ford (*Burh-ford*) connecting the northern Cotswolds with the upper crossings of the Thames. Its military importance, on the confines of Wessex and Mercia, is indicated by Battle Edge, on the slope to the west of the town, which is said to have been the site of a battle fought between the armies of Wessex and Mercia in 752, when King Cuthred routed King Ethelbald.

Ethelbald's standard bore a dragon. An old custom of feasting and carrying the figures of a dragon and



**THE SPLENDID CANOPIED TOMB OF SIR LAURENCE TANFIELD
IN BURFORD CHURCH**

At the feet of the two recumbent figures is the kneeling effigy of Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, who was grandson of Sir Laurence and Lady Tanfield, and was killed in 1643 at the Battle of Newbury.

a giant through the streets of Burford on Midsummer Eve, which was observed even in the last century, was, it has been suggested, a survival of a commemoration of Cuthred's victory. As to the feasting, a "Burford bait" became a proverbial phrase for a sumptuous, not to say excessive, repast.

Domesday Book describes a settlement here with a church and mills, and some forty households, clustering, no doubt, about the church and the enclosure which defended the ford and gave it its name.

Burford owed its rise to prosperity to the development of the Cotswold wool trade, its inhabitants handling the manufactured article as dyers, weavers and clothiers. It returned a member to the parliaments of the first three Edwards; but finding the privilege too expensive for their taste, the burgesses, upon their petition, were relieved of it. In the xvith century malting and saddlery appear as the two main industries of the place. Both Charles II. and William III., on visiting it, were presented with one of the saddles for which it was now famous. The pavements to the river on either side of the picturesque old bridge below the church were made for the use of the tanneries. Burford was a stopping-place on the main road to Stow-on-the-Wold and the Midlands. After a period of decay, the era of new roads and coaching days at the close of the xviiiith century gave to the old town a new lease of life as a posting station on the Oxford, Cheltenham and Gloucester road.

The neighbourhood of the royal forest of Wychwood affected the fortunes of the town in many ways.

The Forest Fair, held every September down to 1855, would draw ten to twenty thousand visitors from the countryside, who came to market and to make merry at the close of the harvest. The great woodland, three thousand acres in extent, was a plentiful source of cheap venison not always legally obtained. Attention cannot fail to be arrested on entering the churchyard by the curious barrel-topped tombstones by which the memory of many a burly citizen is perpetuated. These tombstones were regularly used by poachers as hiding-places for the carcases of deer slain in the forest.

"With the disafforestation of Wychwood passed away many of the old forest traditions and customs, among them that of Sunday shopping in Witney and Burford, and the great Whitsuntide revels on Shipton Down, when all the town of Burford marched up to the forest hostelry, called Capp's Lodge, and there elected a boy and girl as king and queen of the feasting, who demanded of the king's keepers a 'brace of best bucks and a fawn with their horns and hoofs without fee or reward.' Capp's Lodge has passed away too, and a farm-house occupies its site, with just enough of sward and brushwood about it to recall the old forest. But it was once a notorious hostelry, to which it was said that even 'London bloods' constantly resorted for gaming and other unprofitable purposes. The circle of the cock-pit is still pointed out in the turf, and a little square building hard by is shown as the gambling-house where, one morning, after playing and losing all night, Lord Sherborne was seized and bodily carried off to his carriage by his faithful serving-

men, just as he was about to stake his whole estate on a last throw."¹

Bell-founding was another industry of some importance, as is shown by the bell-founders' aisle in the church, where Elizabeth, wife of Edward Neale, bell-founder, is thus commemorated:

Here may I rest under this tombe,
Not to be moved till the day of doome,
Unless my husband who did mee wed
Doth lye with mee when he is dead.

Archæological enthusiasm is apt to blur artistic perception. Those who are fascinated by the problems presented by irregularity of shape and variety of style and date are apt to admire Burford and Dorchester for the very things which spoil their beauty as works of art.

Upon first approaching Burford Church, one is struck by the curious irregularity of its composition. Here indeed, as elsewhere, the rich Perpendicular façade of the south porch harmonises surprisingly well with the massive strength and rich arcade of the Norman tower, in which an ornamented Norman window below the clock is surmounted by an ogival lantern window. But about it the roofs of the aisles are grouped at an unusual angle, and produce a curious, though not altogether unpleasing, effect. This singularity is occasioned by the enlargement in the xvth century of a separate chapel which had been erected in the churchyard near the south-west corner of the main building by the Gild Merchant of Burford, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. At the time of

¹ Falkner, *History of Oxfordshire*, pp. 308, 309.

the enlargement it was opened to the south aisle by an arcade, and re-dedicated to St. Mary and St. Anne. The lengthening of this chapel eastwards as far as the south porch resulted in its joining the church at an angle, since the axes of the two original buildings were not parallel. Blocked doorways and windows indicate the changes then made in the chapel.

The church of St. John the Baptist probably replaced a Saxon building. The tower, resting on four massive piers, the west walls and doorway, and a few other traces of a Late Norman edifice survive. The western doorway, enriched with ball-flower, dog-tooth, and particularly bold and irregular beak-head ornamentation, is very fine.

Transepts were added and the chancel enlarged in the XIIIth century. Early English work is still visible in both transepts, notably the south transept arch and the chancel, with its sedilia, ambry and piscina. But towards the end of the XIVth century alterations were begun which converted the church into the Perpendicular style, as the nave, north and south aisles, and richly decorated south porch with its panelled façade of three storeys and the fan-tracery of the roof bear witness. At the same time an upper storey was added to the Norman tower and a graceful spire erected upon it. The weight of these additions, it can be seen, caused the walls of the tower to crack and the arches to sag. To strengthen it, therefore, the Early English arches, which had been inserted as openings into the transepts, were partly filled; buttresses were applied to the north transept, which was shortened; and the chancel north wall was widened.

On the floor beneath the rood an interesting brass depicts Jan Spicer and his wife Alys (1431) kneeling before a shrine.

This rood, the inscription tells us, was his gift:

Upon my cost I dede do wirche
Wt a lamp birning bright
To woschip god both day and nyght
And a gabul window dede do make
In heith of soule and for Crist sake.

The gable window referred to in this inscription was, it has been suggested,¹ that in the chapel of St. Thomas of Canterbury, west of the south transept. In this chapel there is a squint (Perpendicular) and a turret-staircase leading to two upper rooms. The walls and screen retain traces of colour decoration.

The chapel of St. Thomas of Canterbury, raised upon a small crypt, was built in the xvith century. The octagonal font is of the same period. Upon the lid at the top of the font is scratched *Anthony Sedley, 1649, prisner*. The words recall a tragic event which occurred at Burford in the days of the Commonwealth.

In the xvith century heretics were made to do public penance by carrying a faggot on their shoulders round the market-place, and kneel with it on the altar-steps whilst mass was said, or at the stake when a heretic who had relapsed was a-burning. One charge of heresy brought by a Burfordian against the Vicar of Windrush was that he taught him his ABC "to the intent he should have understanding in the Apocalypse."

¹ See *Burford Records*, by R. H. Gretton, a very thorough piece of work.

A century later, the "heretics" had come into their own and the Puritans were in power.

But there were murmurs of mutiny within the ranks. In May 1649 a couple of regiments which were under orders for Ireland, infected by the Leveller movement against the tyranny of Cromwell and the Parliament, mutinied at Salisbury, and marched away towards Abingdon. There they intended to join other disaffected troops. On their way they quartered themselves for the night in Burford (13th May). A few hours later they were surprised and surrounded by forces which Fairfax had sent in pursuit. The mutineers surrendered after a few shots had been fired from the windows. They were imprisoned in the church, 340 all told, and kept there three days under a general sentence of death, an experience which so chilled their ardour that they refused food, many wept, and presently a humble petition to General Fairfax for mercy was signed by "the sad and heavy-hearted prisoners remaining in the church of Burford." Four were condemned to death, three of whom, Cornet Thompson and Corporals Church and Perkins, were shot in the churchyard, whilst the other prisoners watched the execution from the leads of the church roof, on the morning of the 17th May. Thompson "died gallantly as he had lived religiously," confessing his error and desiring the prayers of the people. He told the soldiers who were appointed to shoot him that, when he held up his hands, they should do their duty. And accordingly, to quote Carlyle's account of the matter, "he was immediately, after the sign given, shot to death. Next after him was a corporal brought

to the same place of execution, where, looking upon his fellow-mutineers, he set his back against the wall, and bade them who were appointed 'shoot,' and died desperately. The third . . . without the least acknowledgment or show of fear, pulled off his doublet; standing a pretty distance from the wall, he bade the soldiers do their duty, looking them in the face till they gave fire, not showing the least kind of terror or fearfulness of spirit. Cornet Dean, who now came forward as the next to be shot, expressed penitence, got pardoned from the general, and there was no more shooting." Thus the Levelling movement was stamped out at Burford. Dean's reprieve encouraged the suspicion that he had all along betrayed the mutineers. After the execution, Lieutenant-General Cromwell went into the church, summoned the remainder of the mutineers from the roof, and addressed them "in his old manner of dissembling speeches," as they described it, admitting that many of the things they desired were just and should be done, but reproving them for having gone about it in a mutinous way. Dean was then made to take his turn in the pulpit and preach. He performed his task, "howling and weeping like a crocodile."

The present pulpit is a modern restoration of that in which Cromwell stood. It comprises a few parts of the original structure.

The register of the church records: "1649. Three soldiers shot to death in Burford Churchyard, buried May 17th." Tradition says that they were shot with their backs against the south-west wall of the Sylvester Chapel, near the mutilated crucifix. But the removal

of ivy (1898) revealed well-defined groups of bullet-marks on the wall of a stable abutting on the church-yard, which indicate that the Levellers stood against it.

The church had fallen into a state of ruin when restorations and alterations were begun—some of them deplorable—in 1828. These were continued, and in part corrected, by Mr. Street in 1870. These alterations and restorations provoked a vehement, and not altogether just, protest from William Morris, who was then living at Kelmscott, some nine miles away. His protest resulted not only in a violent controversy with the zealous vicar, the Rev. Anthony Cass, but also, more beneficially, in the foundation by Morris of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

The oaken stalls with misereres taken out of Burford were set up in the little church of Swinbrook, two and a half miles away, where they surround the six effigies lying “on shelves” there, the only memorial of the great family of Fettiplace which reigned here for many centuries and died out at the beginning of the nineteenth.

Fragments of xvth-century glass have been collected in the east and west windows and the north window of the north transept. The beautiful western windows and those of the north aisle are characteristic work by Kempe.

On the eastern wall of the north transept an inscription on wood records that, among other benefactors, Ralph Willet of Kingham, clerk, gave a cow “for ye benefit of ye Poor, which was afterwards sold for £1 10s.”

The Sylvester Chapel is remarkable for a series of monuments, more curious than beautiful, of the family of that name. They range from 1568 to 1889, and all repeat the same Renaissance design.

The Sylvesters were a leading family of merchants of the town. The tombs bear the arms of their trades—wool-merchants, vintners, tanners, apothecaries, etc.

The Bartholomew aisle (south) is named after the family whose many monuments adorn it. They bear several beautiful epitaphs, of which one at least must be quoted:

Lo! huddled up together lye
Gray age, grene youth, white infancy,
If death doth Nature's laws dispense
And reconciles all difference,
'Tis fit one flesh, one house should have
One tomb, one epitaph, one grave,
And they that lived and loved either,
Should dye and lye and slepe together,
Go, reader, whether go or stay,
Thou must not heare be long away.

The remaining monuments which we have to notice belong to families which are closely associated with Burford Priory.

Of the old Priory, or Hospital of St. John the Evangelist, founded probably in the XIIth century, only a few fragments of xvth-century work remain in the charming rebuilt house which is situated upon a well-wooded slope above the Windrush, to the west of the town. After the dissolution of the monasteries it was granted to Edmund Harman, one of the king's barbers, who apparently engaged in the West Indian

trade. So at least one may deduce from the figures of American Indians, the West Indian fruit, and the hull of a ship depicted on his monument in the church (1569). His brother was a buccaneer. His sons and daughters are depicted in a charming group at the base of the memorial. There is a rambling Latin inscription to the effect that "I was nought, then I was made in God's image, and shall live again," etc. Towards the close of the xvith century the priory was purchased by Sir Laurence Tanfield, who also acquired the lordship of the manor and town of Burford. Tanfield, who became Chief Baron of the Exchequer and died in 1625, built a fine Elizabethan mansion on the site of the old hospital. Tanfield's uneasy ghost is said to haunt his estate at Great Tew, where it is wont to drive in a coach and six on moonlight nights in the park. This cannot be due to inadequate burial, for his body lies in the Tanfield aisle of Burford Church in one of the most gorgeous canopied monuments in the country.

His elaborate Renaissance tomb was erected by Lady Tanfield "to her honoured husband, in memory of his vertues and her sorrows." She also indited the pathetic inscription, ending:

Love made me poet, and this I writh,
My harte did doe yt, and not my witt.

The Lord Chief Baron wears his judicial ermine and collar of S.S. His wife rests by his side.

The effigy of their only daughter, Elizabeth (1585-1639), is seen kneeling at her parents' heads. She was married at the age of fifteen to Henry Cary, first

Viscount Falkland, who deserted her when she was received into the Roman Catholic Church. The Tanfield property, including Burford Priory, passed to her son Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, born at Burford, 1610, and killed at the Battle of Newbury, 1643. An effigy of this famous nobleman kneels at his grandparents' feet.

Lord Falkland preferred to live on the Tanfield estate at Great Tew rather than at Burford Priory. There, it is recorded, "his house being within little more than ten miles of Oxford, he contracted familiarity and friendship with the most polite and accurate men of that University, who found such an immenseness of wit and such a solidity of judgment in him, so infinite a fancy bound in by a most logical ratiocination, such a vast knowledge that he was not ignorant in anything, yet such an excessive humility as if he had known nothing, that they frequently resorted and dwelt with him as in a college situated in a purer air; so that his house was a University in a less volume, whither they came not so much for repose as for study, and to examine and refine those grosser propositions which business and consent made current in vulgar conversation."

Preferring, then, the picturesque surroundings of Great Tew for his residence, Falkland sold the priory to William Lenthall, who presently became the famous Speaker of the Long Parliament. Lenthall was born at Henley, where the old, half-timbered Speaker's House, by the bridgehead and opposite the church, is a charming feature of the riverside town. Lenthall enlarged the priory, added a chapel, and brought

hither the famous pictures he had acquired from King Charles's collection. He retired to Burford at the Restoration, and is said to have repented of his share in the execution of the king. Speaker Lenthall was buried in the church, but by his directions no monument was raised to him. Only a stone slab, bearing the inscription *Vermis sum* (I am a worm), marked his grave, and that has disappeared. Nor (with the exception of a tablet to a descendant who died in Australia in 1894) is there any memorial to any other Lenthall in the church, though the priory remained in the family until 1828. It was then sold, and fell into ruins until it was restored in 1908. It is now the residence of Mr. E. J. Horniman, to whom all lovers of Burford are indebted for the restoration and preservation of several of the old xvth-century houses in the town which had been upon the verge of collapse.

If the priory is not haunted, it might well be. For on the floor of the south transept of the church, known as the Leggare Chapel, because an inscription on the outside of its beautiful window bids us pray for the souls of the father and mother of John Leggare, there is a black marble stone which bears the legend: "Here lyeth the body of John Pryor, Gent., who was murdered and found hidden in the Priory Garden the 3rd day of April, 1697." Pryor was trustee of two great-grandsons of the Speaker. Their mother, widow of his grandson, William Lenthall, took for her second husband her cousin, Lord Abercorn. Pryor, it was said, guarded the interests of his wards too dutifully to suit their step-father's schemes. Loud words and a clash of rapiers were heard one evening, and next day Pryor's

body was found in a summer-house. Lord Abercorn was tried for murder at Oxford Assizes. But the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Arran came to plead on his behalf; a crowd of peers and friends of the accused appeared to overawe the jury; and Lord Abercorn was acquitted.

At the corner of Church Lane will be noticed the sixteenth-century school-house, which has replaced the original building of the grammar school. It was founded in 1571 by Burford worthies, of whom the chief was Simon Wisdom. Here Peter Heylin received his first teaching. Famous as a theologian, historian and controversialist, he was born at Burford in 1600. He espoused the Royalist cause, and during the Civil War, after narrowly escaping the attempts of the Parliamentary troops to arrest him, he made his way to Oxford, where the king appointed him historian of the war. After the defeat of the Royalist cause he was compelled to wander about the country in various disguises, until in 1648 he settled at Minster Lovell, the seat of his elder brother. Here he lived quietly until he moved to Lacy's Court, a house he bought at Abingdon in order that he might more conveniently use the library at Oxford.

So, regretfully, we take our leave of Burford, climbing up from the water-laden meadows about the bridge and church, pausing again and again in the broad, steep High Street to admire the ancient gables, handsome doorways and mullioned windows of old inn or charming dwelling-house.

BAMPTON AND ITS CHURCH

Bampton, half-way between Witney and Faringdon, lies in the midst of a region of flat meadow-land north of the Thames, through which the river flows, silent and slow, towards Lechlade and the Gloucestershire border. The surrounding common-land, known as "The Bush," was for centuries entirely devoid of roads. Travellers who wished to visit the neighbouring villages or towns, such as Oxford, Witney or Burford, were obliged to make their way across the common as best they could.

To-day the little town of Bampton consists of three spacious, winding streets which converge upon a market-place, in which stands a large sixteenth-century town-hall with open arches. It was once a famous market for the distribution of gloves, leggings and jerkins of sheepskins dressed with wool on them. For, like Witney and Burford, Bampton derived the chief source of its prosperity from the sheep-farming which was highly developed upon the neighbouring downs.

At the end of Broad Street, very properly so called, is the large manor-house of Bampton Deanery. A handsome Elizabethan mansion, with gables and mullioned windows, this used to be the summer residence of the Dean of Exeter, and points to the long connection of Bampton with that diocese.

Mill Street, which runs over a mill-stream, leads past an old manor-house and the ruins of an old castle now called Ham Court.

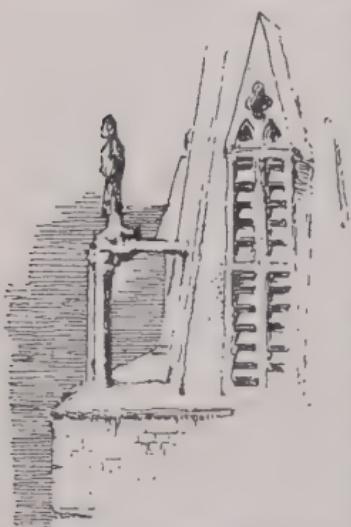
Bampton Castle was built by Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, in 1315. His grandfather, William de Valence, was one of that host of hungry Poitevins who descended upon England in the train of Henry III. and his relatives. He was created Earl of Pembroke, grants of land were showered upon him in Henry's lavish way, and amongst them "our manor of Bampton" in 1249. Aymer took a prominent part in the Scotch wars of Edward I. and the troubles of Edward II.'s reign. Piers Gaveston dubbed him "Joseph the Jew," in allusion to his dark complexion, and it was to him that he surrendered. Aymer fought at Bannockburn, and was killed in a joust. He rests beneath one of the most splendid tombs in Westminster Abbey. The castle which he built at Bampton once formed a quadrangle with towers at each corner, and was surrounded by a moat. There only remain a piece of the battlemented wall and the great gatehouse, which has been converted into an exceedingly picturesque farm-house. Two hundred yards away, the Lady Well is half-hidden in the bushes. It was once in high repute by reason of the miraculous cures which its waters were said to effect. "In the Tiltyard, the name of a field hard by, lingers a memory of the days of chivalry" (Falkner).

During the Civil War Cromwell defeated a Royalist regiment in a cavalry skirmish near Bampton (1645).

To the west of Broad Street a lane leads to the grammar school, founded by Robert Vesey in 1670, and to the church.

Bampton Church is one of the finest in a county singularly rich in noble parish churches. It is cruciform.

The massive central tower, which has a fine interior arcade, rises about 65 feet from the ground. It is surmounted by a simple, stately Early English spire, about 150 feet high, which bears a marked resemblance to that of the cathedral at Oxford. Springing from the corners of the tower, and forming a graceful transition to the spire, are four pinnacles joined to the tower by curious horizontal flying buttresses carrying statues of (?) the Evangelists.



PINNACLE BUTTRESS OF
BAMPTON CHURCH

The lower storey of the tower is a good specimen of Norman architecture. It is surmounted by a later ornamented belfry storey, which is reached by a staircase at the junction of the north transept and nave, and, being encased in a quaint gabled turret, forms a curious feature on the exterior of the building. Parts of the chancel, a window in the north and south transept, and the splendid south door are Early Norman work. The rest of the fabric has been altered and overlaid in each succeeding style.

The old chancel arch has been strengthened by the insertion of a pointed arch above it. The piers of the tower have been altered to Transitional, and the nave and transepts to Early English; whilst the east and west windows and the lovely west doorway, with its rows of ball-flower and four-leaved-flower ornament, belong to the Decorated period. The south porch and



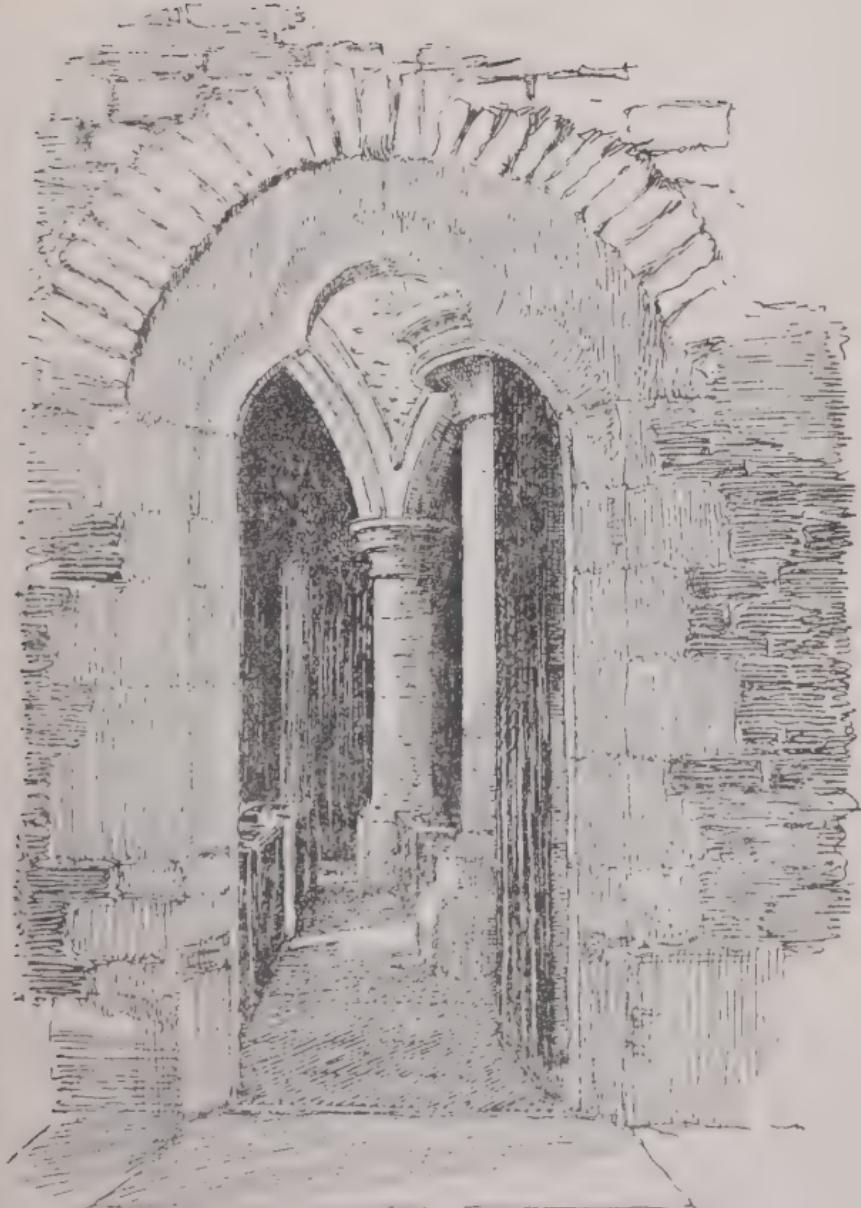
BAMPTON CHURCH FROM THE NORTH-WEST

Showing the curious staircase turret with gabled roof and, on the tower, the pinnacles and flying buttresses supporting statues.



TWO PANELS IN THE RENAISSANCE MONUMENT TO EDMUND HARMAN IN BURFORD CHURCH

The nine sons and seven daughters are shown kneeling with their faces towards the altar.



A GLIMPSE THROUGH THE SOUTH DOOR OF BAMPTON CHURCH

Two columns of the Early English nave appear through the
trefoil-headed doorway.

clerestory are Perpendicular. The chapel to the east of the south transept is also Perpendicular, whilst that to the west of it is approached through a very beautiful Early English archway. The nave has plain arcades, but a most lovely feature is the groups of graceful triplet lancet windows, recessed, with delicate interior and exterior foliation.

There are many notable details, amongst which we may mention the stalls, sedilia and piscina (Early English), three brasses (1429, 1500 and 1633), and the Decorated reredos in the chancel. In the south transept the large stone tomb of George Tompson (1603) bears the inscription:

Heaven hath my soule in happiest joye and blisse,
Earthe hath my earthe wheare bodie tombed is,
Poore hath my store forever to their use,
Friends have my name to keepe without abuse, etc.

There are many inscriptions on the tombstones in Bampton churchyard. But none have so much distinction as those which have been destroyed. Mr. Giles, in his *History of Bampton*, 1847, quotes the following:

Do no evil
For the Devil
Will have you if you do;
Better 'twere given
To you in Heaven
To join the blessed few.

And

This world's a city full of crooked streets,
Death is the market-place where all men meets;
Were life a merchandise that wealth could buy,
The rich would live, none but the poor would die.

The grave of Richard Winter is here, who is supposed to have been the tax-gatherer of whom it was wittily written:

Here comes Richard Winter, Collector of Taxes,
I advise you to pay him whatever he axes;
And that very soon, and without any flummery,
For tho' his name's Winter, his actions are *summary*.

John Philips, the poet, author of *The Splendid Shilling* and a much-admired poem on cyder, was born in the vicarage of Bampton, 1676.

Bampton has contrived to preserve—it is not a resuscitation—its old custom of folk-dancing. At Whitsuntide one can see stalwart men in white jackets and trousers, adorned with brilliantly coloured ribbons and flowers, performing the morris-dance to the music provided by a fiddler. It is a scene which takes one back into the xviiith century, for the men have been so accustomed to this annual amusement that they dance without the smallest suspicion of self-consciousness.

ABINGDON

The great Benedictine abbey of Abingdon long surpassed Oxford, and rivalled Wallingford and Eynsham, in wealth and importance. The history of the town (which derives its name from Abbendune, the town of Abba) was for many centuries the history of the monastery. It is known to us from the famous *Chronicle of Abingdon Abbey*.

A small monastery was founded here towards the

end of the viith century by one Hean, nephew of Cissa, a sub-king of Wiltshire and Berkshire. Hean and his sister, Cilla, being fired with enthusiasm for the religious life, obtained from their uncle the grant of a piece of land in the south of Oxfordshire for the establishment of a monastery and nunnery. Cilla founded the nunnery of Helnestowe, probably near where St. Helen's Church now stands. She dedicated it to St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, who was credited with having discovered the Holy Cross, the nails of which were afterwards believed to have been found near Abingdon. Cilla's nunnery soon ceased to exist. But the cult of the saint thus honoured, in combination with the cult of the Holy Cross, persisted at Abingdon throughout the Middle Ages.

Hean's religious ardour appears to have cooled, or his energies to have been diverted, for he delayed his task of building a monastery, whilst Cissa was succeeded by Ceadwalla, and Ceadwalla by Ini, the founder of Glastonbury. Then at length the monastery was established. It was cradled in troublous times. Situated on the confines of Wessex, it suffered from the wars with the rival kingdom of Mercia.

The abbey was sacked by the Danes, and afterwards, for some reason, deprived of its possessions by Alfred. But its riches were increased when King Athelstan held court there in 939; for ambassadors arriving from the King of France brought many gifts which Athelstan entrusted to the abbey. They consisted of gold and silver and jewels, and such precious relics as parts of the crown of thorns and the staff of our Lord, as well as a finger of St. Denis.

A curious miracle is recorded at this period (c. 960). The right of the monastery to a meadow by the river-side near Iffley was disputed.

In order to make good their claim, the monks had recourse to the following device.

Taking a round shield, they placed upon it a sheaf of corn, in the summit of which was fixed a lighted taper; and having launched the shield and its burden upon the surface of the Thames, which flowed past their church, and permitted it to drift away with the stream, they followed in a boat, and their antagonists stood on the Oxford bank of the river, watching the issue. The shield with its freight presently left the Thames, and passing up and along the little brook by which the disputed meadow was surrounded, it once more entered into the main stream.¹ The course taken by the drifting shield and sheaf decided the dispute, and established the claim of Abingdon to the meadow, in a manner which would appeal particularly to unconverted Saxon opponents of the monks. For this story points to the survival in a Christian age of the traditions of Scandinavian mythology. The shield and sheaf recall the Saxon hero Scyld, whose father Sceaf, when a boy, was said to have drifted out to sea in an oarless boat, with a sheaf of corn for a pillow, and to have been saved as by a miracle.

After the abbey had once more been ruined by the Danes, it was given by King Eadric to St. Ethelwold. He came hither from Glastonbury in 955, and, besides rebuilding the church, he here first introduced into England the strict rule of St. Benedict. The church

¹ *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, ed. Stevenson, i. 88.

built by him is said to have had a round east and west end and a round tower.

Abingdon did not welcome the Norman invaders. Some of the tenants of the abbey were amongst the band of patriots who endeavoured to rally round Hereward the Wake in the last hopeless struggle for English freedom. William the Conqueror visited their sins upon the head of the Saxon abbot, whom he deposed. Under his Norman successor the abbey flourished. We have seen how Robert d'Oilly, William's Keeper of Oxford, was brought into conflict with the monks by his exactions, and afterwards converted and "honourably buried within the Presbytery at Abingdon on the north side, and his wife lies in peace buried on his left." (See p. 73.) That the Constable of Oxford should have chosen Abingdon rather than Oxford for his burial-place shows how far that abbey had eclipsed the foundation of St. Frideswide at this time. Its prosperity was further increased when Henry I. appointed Faricius, his Italian physician, abbot in 1100. The Saxon work of Ethelwold was now replaced with Norman monastic buildings. The church was almost wholly rebuilt, and the lower part of the tower completed. The timber for the work was brought from Wales, teams of twelve bullocks taking seven weeks to complete the journey.

Faricius' buildings were for the most part superseded in the XIIIth, XIVth and XVth centuries. But the eastern parts of the Norman church were still visible in Leland's day (1543).

The Gatehouse (c. 1460), now part of the municipal buildings, is practically the sole survival of the great

monastery. The site of the church of St. Mary, within the gardens of the Abbey House, has recently been excavated (1922). The position and extent of the Norman church of Faricius were then determined, and traces of the Saxon church of Ethelwold were found. There were also discovered fragments of cinerary urns and other remains indicating that the site had previously been occupied by Romano-British settlements.

It was to Abingdon that Queen Matilda fled on foot through the snow when she escaped from the castle at Oxford. It was at Abingdon that Edmund Rich was born (c. 1170). The future archbishop and saint saw visions as a boy in the fields around Abingdon ere he entered on his career of teaching at Oxford, and of opposing the papal tax-gatherers. To his memory Edmund, Earl of Cornwall founded a chapel in St. Helen's Parish, the site of which cannot now be identified.

It was at Abingdon, again, that the first two Grey Friars of St. Francis, on their way to Oxford, sought shelter for the night, only to be turned away with jeers and kicks, for the monks of the old orders, grown rich and worldly, had no welcome for the new brethren, with their ragged clothes and foreign gestures, and their vows of poverty and ignorance:

"The porter who came to the door looked upon them (having dirty faces, ragged vestments, and uncouth speech) to be a couple of jesters or counterfeits. The prior caused them to be brought in that they might quaff it and show sport to the monks. But the friars said they were mistaken in them; for they were not

such kind of people, but the servants of God, and the professors of an apostolic life. Whereupon the expectation of the monks being thus frustrated, they vilely spurned at them and caused them to be thrust out of the gate. But one of the young monks had compassion on them, and said to the porter: 'I desire thee for the love thou bearest me that when the prior and monks are gone to rest thou wouldest conduct those poor people into the hay-loft, and there I shall administer to them food.' Which being according to his desire performed, he carried to them bread and drink, and remaining some time with them, bade them at length a good night, and devoutly commended himself to their prayers."

Abingdon derived not a little of its importance from its position on the river highway from London to Oxford. Even before the Conquest, we learn that a toll of a hundred herrings was paid to the monastery by each boat that passed in Lent. This toll was paid in return for the right of using a new channel which was dug through a meadow to the south of the church, by permission of the abbot, when the main course of the stream had become blocked. This was in Edward the Confessor's time. It was agreed that all barges passing through and carrying herrings during Lent should give to the cook of the monastery a hundred of them, and that when the servant of each barge brought them into the kitchen, the cook should give him for his pains five of them, a loaf of bread and a measure of ale.

Besides the advantage of its position on the river, the monastery of Abingdon enjoyed the privilege of

holding a fair within the town itself. This was a privilege for which they fought long and hard against the opposition of their rivals at Wallingford and Oxford, and finally vindicated their right to it before Henry II.

THE GUILDHALL

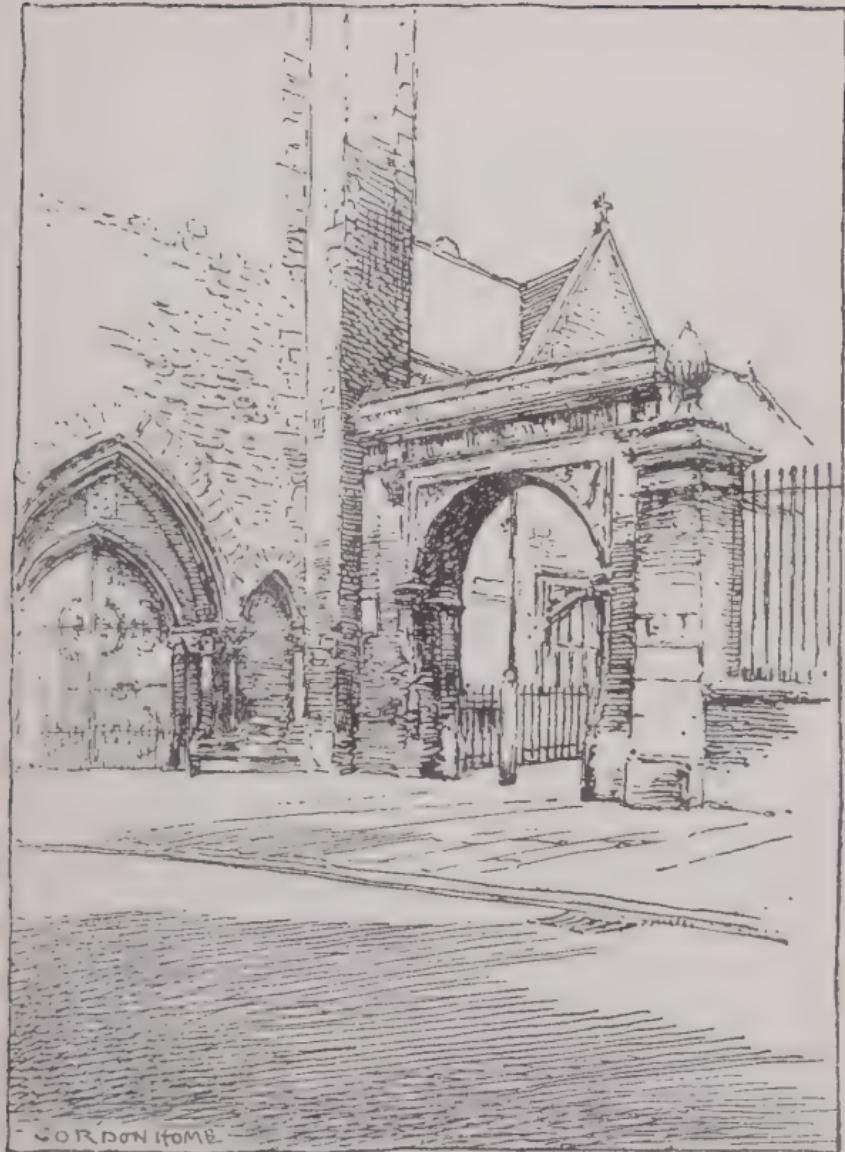
In this connection, Anthony Wood has preserved for us an account of an extraordinary assault upon the abbey, made by the townsmen of Abingdon and Oxford in 1327.

The occasion was the alleged "unreasonable dealings of the abbot and convent in relation to the market," and the "bloody outrage" which Wood describes was doubtless an attempt to overthrow the monopoly and jurisdiction of the Church. Assembling at midnight in the church of St. Helen, they marched upon the Guildhall, situated in the middle of the town, lately built by the abbey "because the town and market was theirs," and destroyed it. Then they delivered an assault upon the abbey. "But whilst they were in doing it, certain seculars, who were deputed for the defence of the monastery, sallied out of the gate, and falling on the said malefactors, killed two of them and, putting the rest to flight," took several of them prisoners. The Abendonians then applied to Oxford for assistance. "Wherefore on the Lord's Day following came in the middle of the night the whole Commonalty of Oxford, the mayor and other burghers, accompanied (as 'tis said) with a multitude of Scholars." St. John's Hospital gallantly withstood their attack,

but they forced an entry through the church of St. Nicholas at the abbey gates and, breaking into the church, dragged the monks from the altar and slew one. "In the meantime the abbot and the rest of the monks consulting flight, ventured over the river behind the abbey, and so (except some that were drowned) escaped." The rioters looted the treasury of the church and abbot, and destroyed many charters and records, before the heavy hand of the king fell upon them, restoring order and the abbot, and hanging twelve of the malefactors.

The church of St. Nicholas, mentioned in the foregoing story, is attached to the south side of the abbey gateway, to which its richly ornamented Norman doorway adds a notable feature. That it still exists is due to the intervention of Dr. Peter Heylin, the scholar and historian, whose name we have mentioned both at Minster Lovell and at Burford. He settled at Abingdon in 1653, and successfully opposed the destruction of the church which the Presbyterian party was anxious to accomplish. As to the Gild Hall which the rioters destroyed, its successor still stands "in the middle of the town." It was built in 1678 to replace another market-house.

The design of this extraordinarily beautiful Renaissance building, which is in itself sufficient to warrant a visit to Abingdon, has been attributed to Inigo Jones and to a pupil of Wren. Jones, Wren, and Hawkesmoor all executed fine work at Oxford. The lovely proportions and restrained decorations of the Town Hall at Abingdon are worthy of the greatest architect.



GORDON HOME

THE RENAISSANCE GATEWAY INTO THE CHURCHYARD OF
ST. HELEN'S, ABINGDON

It is probably unique of its period in England.

During the Civil War Abingdon was the centre of many operations, both before and after its seizure by the Parliamentary troops under Essex. Its position on the Thames and proximity to the royal headquarters at Oxford rendered it an important place to hold. Repeated attempts were made by the Royalists to recapture it, but in vain.

The famous bridge, which superseded the old ford, was built in 1416 by the Guild of the Holy Cross. The "building of the bridges at Burford and Culham Hithe with the connecting causeway," Mr. James Townshend writes in his *History of Abingdon*, "placed Abingdon on a main route from London to the West, and left Wallingford with her dozen churches to dwindle on a superseded road. The work was at once a result and the cause of a great development of trade, particularly of the cloth trade."

During the Civil War the cloth trade deserted Abingdon for Leeds. But the town still remains, as it always has been, the centre of an agricultural district, fortified by flourishing industries of brewing, malting, and carpet-making.

The Guild of the Holy Cross, the bridge-builders, was closely connected with St. Helen's. The church, indeed, was practically rebuilt in the xvth century by that fraternity, who held their Exchequer Chamber above the second north porch. A fine brass on the west wall of the second south aisle commemorates Geoffry Barbour, a merchant of Abingdon, who helped to build the bridge. He appears in a monk's dress (1417).

St. Helen's stands near the probable site of Cilla's

nunnery, in the angle formed by the junction of the Ock and the Thames.

The proportions of this fine Perpendicular church are somewhat peculiar. It is broader than it is long (97 ft. \times 108 ft.), and consists of five gabled aisles of seven bays. The two northern aisles are narrower than the other three. The effect of the width of the five aisles is to give an almost mosque-like effect of flat distances glimpsed through a succession of arches, an effect which is enhanced by the sharp mouldings of the pillar-heads. The absence of a chancel arch, dividing nave from chancel, is notable.

The two south aisles were added in 1539, when increased accommodation became necessary owing to the destruction of the abbey-church. The carving of the xviiiith-century organ-case is bold and handsome. Close to the Barbour brass is one in memory of Thomas Magott, 1627, and at the east end of the same south aisle is the genealogical tree of William Lee (*d.* 1617), its branches spreading prolifically to record 197 of his descendants. The old nave, the central of the three northernmost aisles, has a very rich timber roof. The roofs of the chancel and present nave date from 1873, when much restoration from xviiiith-century barbarism was effected.

The octagonal spire (rebuilt 1886) has light flying buttresses springing from crocketed turrets on the angles, and bears a strong resemblance to that of Bampton and Oxford. It was added, some time in the xvth century, to the Early English parapeted tower, which dates from the beginning of the xiiiith century.

The handsome xvith- and xviiiith-century brass

candelabra are notable examples of church furniture. The pulpit is Jacobean (1636). The door of the second north porch is dated a year later. A square altar-tomb in the north-west corner of the church is "honoured with the bones of our pious benefactour, Richard Curtaine, a principall magistrate of this Corporation." His portrait hangs above the font. Along the edge of the tomb runs this inscription:

Our Curtaine in this lower press,
Rests folded up in natur's dress,
His dust p'fumes his vrn, and hee
This towne with liberalitie.

Near the baptistery is the canopied tomb of John Roysse (restored 1873). Roysse refounded in 1563 the Grammar School after the dissolution of the monastery. Abingdon is rich in xvth- and xviiiith-century houses. Street after street is full of glad surprises. Timbered dwellings and gabled cottages mingle with the colour and charm of Georgian brick- and Renaissance stone-work. But nothing is more charming than the alms-houses with which the town is so plentifully endowed. Besides the alms-houses of St. John's Hospital and those founded by the Tompkins family in 1731, lining the flagged alley of Ock Street, there is a group of alms-houses about the churchyard of St. Helen's, which makes an unforgettable picture in combination with the architecture of the church and the scenery of the riverside. Seen through the Renaissance gateway, at the north-west corner of the tower, and across the churchyard, they form a scene of rare peace and charm. Below the south wall of the church the

Thames runs, swift and silent, past the end of a house with a little oriel window looking out upon the converging streams that swirl and eddy under the old bridge, and the willows, poplars and watermeads of the further bank.

Along the river embankment is an alms-house, recently rebuilt in the modern Renaissance style, and to the north and south of the church are other alms-houses dating from the beginning of the xviiith century. But still more charming and picturesque are the Long Alley alms-houses lining the western boundary of the churchyard. They consist of a single row of thirteen one-roomed houses, with a timber loggia or alley, in the centre of which is the Hospital Hall. A wooden porch with fluted pilasters in the middle of the loggia has some old paintings over the lintel illustrating texts on Charity. The hall, which has beautiful Jacobean panelling and early xviith-century portraits, contains, besides some fine old oak furniture, some verses on vellum commemorating the building of the bridge and dating from 1457-8.

For this alms-house was built by the Fraternity of the Holy Cross in 1446. Besides their bridge-building and church-building, the fraternity were also responsible for setting up, in the market-place, the great Abingdon Cross. This cross, which was erected in the reign of Henry VI., was forty-five feet in height and richly decorated with arms and statuary. It was destroyed by the Parliamentarians when General Waller occupied the town in 1644.

The Fraternity of the Holy Cross was incorporated by royal charter in 1441, and was dissolved in 1547.

Christ's Hospital was then founded as a secular charity (1553) by Sir John Mason, a trusted diplomat under four sovereigns—Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary and Elizabeth. He it was who obtained for the borough its charter of incorporation (1555).

A fresh charter was granted to the borough by George III., whose portrait, and that of Queen Charlotte by Gainsborough, adorn the Council Chamber.

The sign of the Beehive Inn, near the station, immortalises the former landlord, William Honey, in the well-known lines:

Within this Hive we're all alive,
Good liquor makes us funny;
If you are dry, step in and try
The flavour of our Honey.

The bridge, the river, the abbey ruins, the school, and Christ's Hospital, St. Helen's Church and the Town Hall, all these combine with a wealth of Georgian houses to make Abingdon a town of distinction and unforgettable charm.

DORCHESTER AND ITS ABBEY

Four miles east of Culham Station and nine miles south-east of Oxford lies the very ancient town of Dorchester. One of the oldest cities in England, it is situated on the north bank of the river Thame, half a mile above its junction with the Thames, or Isis. For from this junction of the Thame with the Isis the name of Thame-Isis (=Thames) has been supposed to be derived.



DORCHESTER ABBEY-CHURCH

Looking eastwards from the spacious south aisle which is so strangely walled off at its eastern end. The Norman Romanesque font is of lead.

From the great sea-like plain at the south-east of Oxfordshire, close to the river on the Berkshire shore, rise two curious, isolated, round hills. Their summits are crowned with trees, and they are named Wittenham Clumps. Although the highest of them is under 300 feet high, so flat is the surrounding country that they dominate it completely, and form a landmark on the countryside for many miles in every direction. On the lower of the two clumps is a tumulus called Brightwell Barrow. The other, which is separated from its twin by a shallow valley, is quite elaborately fortified with earthworks still clearly traceable. A triple line of entrenchment with a vallum and deep fossæ describes a circumference of over a mile in length. The name of this fortified hill, probably its British name, is Sinodum Hill.

Wittenham Clumps look across the valley of the Thames to the line of ancient British hill-forts which mark the course of the Icknield Way through Berkshire from Blewbury to Liddington. It is reasonable to suppose that Sinodum Hill was the advance-post of the British tribe—the Atrebates—who held the country south of the Thames now called Berkshire, and that it was intended to restrain the inhabitants of the Oxfordshire shore from raiding the plain between the river and the Berkshire downs, which were guarded by the aforesaid line of hill-forts.

The district on the Oxfordshire side of the Thames was occupied by another tribe, generally referred to as the Dobuni. If Sinodum Hill was an advance-post of the Atrebates, the military answer of the Dobuni to the challenge thus thrown out by their neighbours

may be found in the earthworks of Dyke Hills. For below Dorchester, and across the loop formed by a bend of the Thames and its junction with the Thame, another entrenchment has been thrown up. This earthwork is composed of a double vallum enclosing a fosse or moat. It was once supposed to be a Roman entrenchment, made when the Romans were attacking Sinodum. It is certainly pre-Roman, but the rest is guesswork. The Roman road from Dorchester to Alchester—the only other known Roman town in Oxfordshire—sixteen miles away across the bog and forests of Otmoor, can still be recognised at intervals in a grass-grown track. It diverges from the modern Oxford road a little to the north of Dorchester.

Many Roman remains found at and around Dorchester prove beyond doubt that it was a Roman station, though its Roman name is not known, nor the extent of it. But parts of the Roman *enceinte* can be traced with probability in the older lanes and paths surrounding the single winding street of which it now consists.

It is not Roman remains, however, which will engage the attention of the visitor to Dorchester, but the abbey-church. The view from the bridge by which the road from Henley crosses the Thame and enters Dorchester is singularly picturesque. On the one side is the straight line of the entrenchment of Dyke Hills, and away to the left the broad stream of the Thames laves the bases of Wittenham Clumps, those two isolated, tree-crowned hills rising abruptly from the plain beyond. On the right, the long red roof of the abbey, terminating in a sturdy western tower, rises

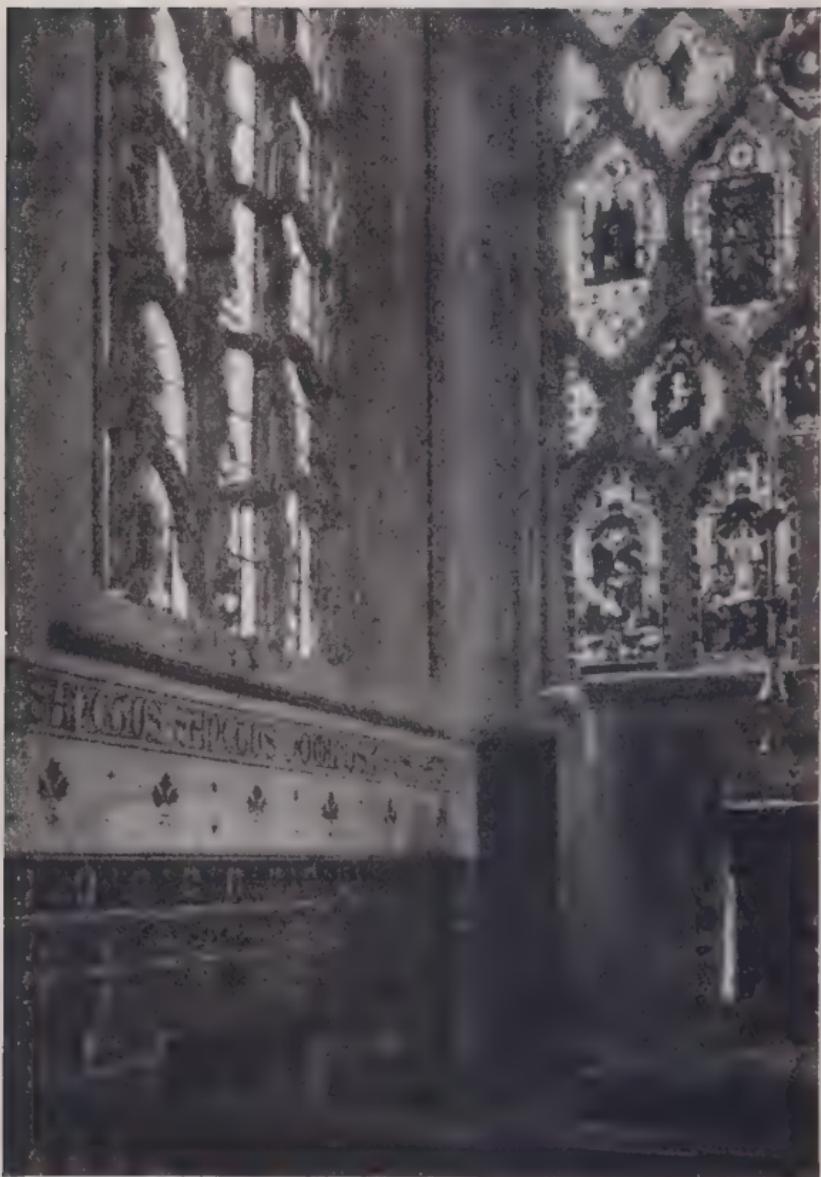
above the light green of pollarded willows, which fringe the banks of the river, and the dark green of vast, spreading yews, which cast their shade over a couple of thatched cottages and the churchyard. Then the long façade of the south wall of the abbey is revealed. It is lighted by a long row of uniform Decorated windows, shored by shallow buttresses, and relieved only by light buttress turrets at the east end, the western tower, and on the south-west, behind an ancient yew-tree, a low, deep porch with an open arcading of old oak with cinquefoil heads.

This tower and porch are XVIITH-century Perpendicular.

The church of Dorchester bears the invocation of St. Peter, St. Paul and St. Birinus. The latter, whose name is possibly preserved in Berens Hill on the western slopes of Chiltern, and in Bicester (Birencestre), was the apostle of Wessex. He began to preach the Gospel to the West Saxons in A.D. 634. His mission was crowned with success. Cynegils, the king, was converted and baptised at Dorchester, his sponsor on that occasion being, curiously enough, Oswald of Northumbria. Birinus chose Dorchester for the seat of his bishopric, attracted to it, doubtless, by its prestige as a Roman fortified station. He must have been a bold as well as a pious evangelist, for Dorchester at that time appears to have been within the territory of that stout pagan, Penda, King of Mercia, whose neighbourhood was not at all wholesome for missionaries. St. Birinus died about the middle of the century. The history of the diocese after his death is obscure. It would appear that the

See of Wessex was divided into those of Dorchester and Winchester, Oxfordshire being included in the latter. When Mercia accepted Christianity, it is said to have been divided into dioceses by Archbishop Theodore (680), one of which was Leicester, whither the bishop's seat was moved from Dorchester. About the year 950, however, the bishop's stool reverted to Dorchester, and the diocese was enormously extended. For at that time Leofwin, Bishop of Lindsey, is said to have joined his diocese to that of Leicester and then to have amalgamated them with that of Dorchester, to which he transferred his seat. Thus at the time of the Conquest the wealthy and enormous bishopric of Dorchester extended from the Thames to the Humber. The Saxon bishop, Wulfwy, was not deposed at the Conquest, but upon his death (1067) the see passed into the hands of a remarkable Norman, Remi or Remigius. Almoner of the Benedictine monastery of Fécamp, Remigius joined William's expedition with a ship and twenty fighting men. The Conqueror rewarded him, as he had promised, with the first bishopric that fell vacant. This was Dorchester. Twenty years later, Remigius moved the stool of his bishopric from Dorchester, "where it had been founded without convenience or adequate dignity," to the stronger centre of Lincoln.

It had been decided at the Synod of London in 1072 to conform with the papal decrees which forbade the placing of bishops' seats in small towns. Whether he was influenced by that decision or not, the military strength of Lincoln, made doubly strong by the recent erection of William's great castle there, rendered the



THE JESSE WINDOW IN DORCHESTER ABBEY-CHURCH

The Tree of Christ springing from Jesse is shown in the stone tracery of the window and not, as is usual, on the glass. The east window, part of which appears on the right, is a very unusual example of reticulated tracery.

change a natural and prudent step on the part of the Norman bishop. Apart from that, Lincoln was an important town, whilst Dorchester had by this time relapsed into an almost insignificant village.

Following upon the translation of the see, the old cathedral was converted into a monastery of Augustin Canons in 1140 by Alexander, the great builder and Bishop of Lincoln. The subsequent history of the monastery is of little interest or distinction. It consists, as we have it, of the usual scandals and visitations designed to correct them.

The bones of St. Birinus constituted the chief treasure of the place. They were discovered at the end of the xiith century, and placed in a splendid marble shrine, for a pilgrimage to which an indulgence of forty days was granted in 1301.

For a hundred years before the Dissolution there is a record of grave abuses in connection with the monastery. As the outcome of an enquiry into these scandals in 1530, instructions were given that the public way through the cloister should be stopped, and that the gates between the nave and the choir should be locked at night. This reminds us of the fact that part of the church belonged to the monastery and part to the parish. Since the outer entrance to the parish church would always be open, and likewise the entrance from the choir to the monastery, it was found necessary, in order to prevent nocturnal comings and goings from the town, to lock the gate between the parochial nave and the conventional choir.

The preservation of the conventional portion of the abbey—apart from the nave which was the parish

church—is probably due to the public spirit and munificence of Richard Beauforest. He was a relative of a former abbot of that name, in whose memory a brass is inscribed:

Here lieth Sir Richard Bewfforeste,
Pray Jhesu give his sowle good reste.

Beaufort purchased the monastic portion of the building for £140 at the time of the Dissolution (1554), and bequeathed it to the parish.

"I bequeth," so runs part of his pious will, "my sowle to Allmighty God my Maker and Redemer, to have the fruition of the Deitie with our blessed Ladie and All Saints, and my bodie to be buried in our Lady ile within the Churche of Dorchester aforesaid. Itm, I give to the reparations of my Parishe church xxs. . . . Itm," he concludes, "I bequeth the Abbey Church of Dorchester which I have bought, and the implements thereof, to the Paryshe of Dorchester aforesaid, so that the said Parishioners shall not sell, alter or alienate the said Church Implements, or any part or parcell thereof, withoute the consente of my heires and executors. . . ."

But in spite of this proviso altered the church was, and altered deplorably. A painful amount of vandalism was committed, which was finally checked and corrected by the efforts of the Oxford Architectural Society (1845).

Out of the remains of the old guest-house of the abbey John Fettiplace, one of the great family we have mentioned at Swinbrook (p. 120), built the free school in 1650. The school-house, west of the church,

is the only remaining fragment of the monastic buildings.

The cathedral of the days when Dorchester ranked with the great bishoprics of Canterbury, York and Winchester, and extended over the whole of Wessex and Mercia, has completely disappeared. No portion of the present building is of an earlier date than that of the translation of the see to Lincoln. For soon after the establishment of the monastery in 1140, the new canons proceeded to alter and refashion the old Saxon church built by Bishop Eadnoth one hundred years before. Under the patronage of the Governors of Wallingford Castle it grew into the remarkable building which survives to-day.

Professor Freeman justly remarked of the abbey-church of Dorchester that "though to grace of outline and justness of proportion it can lay no claim whatever, . . . yet what is lacking in beauty is made up in singularity, its ground-plan and general character being nearly unique among churches of the like extent and ecclesiastical dignity."¹

This singularity of plan has caused the abbey-church of Dorchester to be the battlefield of archæologists, the excitement of whose rival theories has blunted them to the æsthetic failings of their subject. Dorchester has gained fame from their disputes and the architectural conundrums which its strange shape suggests. But the visitor who is drawn to it by the echo of these disputes and expects to find something

¹ E. A. Freeman, "On the Architecture of the Abbey Church of Dorchester." *Proceedings of the Archæological Institute, Oxford, 1854.*

beautiful as well as rare will be sadly disappointed. Yet the first sight of the church as we approach it is indeed striking.

The south façade, facing the river, conveys a remarkable effect of unity and length. A long reach of wall, uninterrupted by a transept, and only broken by shallow buttresses and lofty, uniform windows with tracery of the same pattern at regular intervals, stretches from east to west.

This effect has been attained, as will at once appear when we enter the church, by continuing the aisle of the nave and the aisle of the choir in one unbroken length. The church is long, 210 feet, and the uniform line makes it appear longer.

The present shape of the abbey-church is obviously the result of a series of additions and alterations to an originally smaller fabric. In fact, the church by which the old Saxon cathedral was replaced soon after the foundation of the monastery was in the Transitional Norman style. The nave of this Transitional building corresponded in size with that of the present one, and extended beyond the chancel arch. That it did so extend, and was of a piece with it, is shown by the string-course which is prolonged into the chancel from the sides of the nave, though interrupted on the south side by the Decorated arches.

The north wall remains untouched, save for the insertion of two windows and a doorway. The absence of windows in the lower part is accounted for by the fact that the cloister of the monastery ran along the outside.

To this Transitional building additions were made

at different dates, but mainly within the period of the Decorated style.

The scene which awaits us on entering the building by the south porch is a very strange one. We are confronted by a long, flat and featureless expansion of wall—the north wall of the nave—whilst on the south side another blank wall blocks out the south chancel aisle from the south nave aisle. The long bare space of the nave with a single aisle is terminated at the western end by a low, massive tower. No triforium or clerestory, no central tower or transept interrupts its barren length till it joins a choir flanked by an aisle on either side. But this very bareness enhances the effect of the singularly beautiful choir arcades and the kaleidoscopic blaze of colour with which the great east window concludes a building whose beginning was so long and dreary, so strange and so austere.

Freeman draws attention to the extreme splendour of the arches of each side of the choir, whose existence was rendered possible by the omission of a clerestory, as in Stafford Church. "Their beauty," he says, "is not at all derived from mere ornament, for, though all their detail is well and elaborately wrought, and the section of the arch-mouldings is very complicated, yet there is no great amount of actual enrichment even here, and the pillars, where we should certainly have looked for floriated capitals, are without that most effective of enrichments. Their real merit consists in their perfect proportion, the exquisitely balanced relation between the arch and its pier, and the beautiful form of the former."

The absence of vaulting in the choir makes possible

the great height and width of the east window. The top part of this window was restored by Mr. Butterfield. It has a reticulated pattern, and is divided by a heavy central buttress. The projecting bay which contains it was added towards the end of the Decorated period, and has a large window on either side.

The tracery of all three windows, it will be noticed, extends throughout their whole length, and sculptured figures and pinnacles are applied to it as additional ornaments, after the manner of the east window in Merton Chapel. These characteristics are particularly striking in the extraordinary (though by no means beautiful) Jesse window on the north side. Here the branches of his genealogical tree spring in stone tracery from the recumbent body of Jesse, and, like the mullions and jambs, are laden with statuettes. In the little windows behind the very beautiful sedilia and piscina some old glass has been reset. It represents scenes from the life of St. Birinus.

Whether the church was originally provided with transepts is a debated point. The round arches cut in the wall on either side are of a date later than Norman. But the fine Norman doorway in the north transept seems to indicate that there were transepts at any rate in the Transitional building.

The south choir aisle, as large as the choir itself, adds to the sense of spaciousness conveyed by the whole interior. This aisle was built at the beginning of the XIVth century, and was followed by the addition of the south aisle of the nave. Rather earlier than either of these the north aisle was built (c. 1280).

The north aisle and the three fine arches north of

the choir show the Early English style developing into Decorated as the work of alteration and reconstruction proceeded. Dog-tooth moulding, for instance, will be observed on some of the capitals and windows. But the tracery of the windows is geometrical and, with the south choir aisle, southern arcade, and a recessed eastern bay or presbytery, belongs to the later period.

When the south aisle of the nave was added to the south choir aisle, so as to form the long exterior façade to which we have already referred, the original external western wall of the choir aisle was allowed to remain as it stood. A small doorway formed the only means of communication between these two portions of the building. The reason why an arch was not opened in this wall was, possibly, that it was desired to introduce the elevated altar platform on the west side of this blank wall, and to keep the two chapels separate. But whether that was the reason of the design or the result of it, nobody can fail to agree with Freeman's verdict that "a greater æsthetical blunder can hardly be conceived than this complete blocking off of one portion of the building from the other."

Near the raised altar just referred to is an old Norman leaden font, on the sides of which are the eleven Apostles under canopies.

We have already mentioned the brass commemorating Abbot Beauforest on the floor of the chancel. There are two other brasses by the group of altartombs in the south chancel aisle, one of which, partly damaged, is to Sir J. Drayton, 1431, showing a Saracen's head and the collar of S.S. This was a

Lancastrian Order, the S. being the initial letter of *Souverain*, the favourite motto of Henry IV.

The tombs in this aisle are disgracefully disfigured with initials recently cut. The first is that of an unknown bishop, the second is attributed to Lord Segrove, Governor of Wallingford, c. 1400. The last is that of John Stonor, Chief Justice (*d.* 1354), and the third is that of an unknown knight in chain and plate armour, very richly chased and finely carved. His head rests on a tilting helmet. Very delicate is the workmanship of the leather fastenings which attach the helmet to the chain chin-piece. Sword and spurs and statuettes from the tomb have disappeared.

A slate slab on the floor of the chancel bears a long and touching inscription to Mrs. Anne Carleton, who died in childbed in 1669:

Had death's impartial hand beene aw'd to spare
The chast, the wise, the vertuous or the fayre,
Sure she had yet survivd, . . .

EWELME CHURCH AND ALMS-HOUSE

Fourteen miles south-east of Oxford, at the foot of the Chiltern Hills, lies Ewelme, one of the most charming and complete of English villages. The clear water issuing from the hillside is said to have given its name to Ewelme = "the spring." The buildings which bring us to it are connected with two men of note, Thomas Chaucer and his son-in-law, William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. Thomas Chaucer may have been the eldest son of Geoffrey Chaucer, the poet. For



**THE CANOPIED TOMB OF ALICE, COUNTESS OF SUFFOLK,
IN EWELME CHURCH**

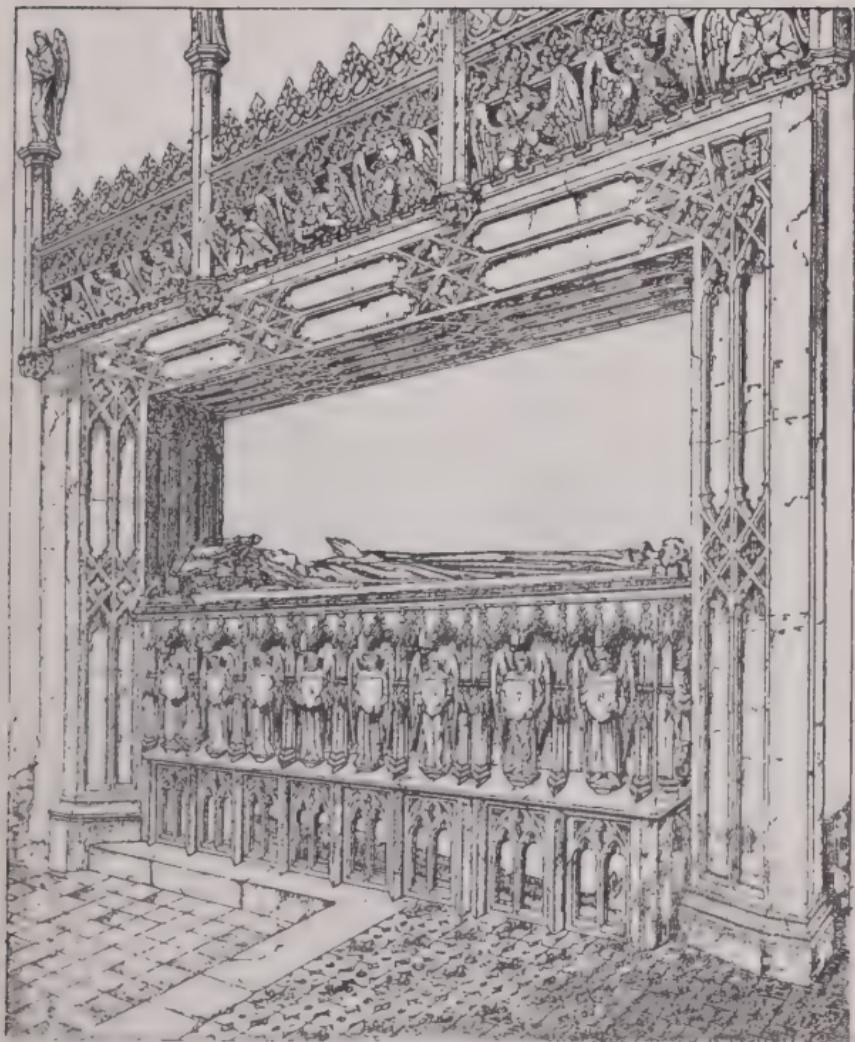
She was the daughter of Thomas Chaucer and married William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. The canopy at the head of the recumbent effigy is one of the most elaborate examples of deeply-cut Perpendicular sculpture in existence.



BRASSES OF THOMAS CHAUCER AND MATILDA HIS WIFE IN
EWELME CHURCH

He was Speaker of the House of Commons and Chief Butler to Richard II., Henry IV., and Henry V. His daughter and heiress, Alice, became Duchess of Suffolk.

upon the tomb of Thomas within the church at Ewelme occur the arms of Roet (*gules three catherine wheels or*). Now Geoffrey Chaucer married one Philippa, who is said, though not certainly known, to have been Philippa Roet. If so, it is quite probable that Thomas was their son, but it cannot be more definitely stated. Of Thomas we know that he was Chief Butler to Richard II., Henry IV. and Henry V., and Speaker of the House of Commons. He acquired much wealth. In 1411 he was granted the manors of Woodstock, Hanborough, Wootton and Stonesfield. He was appointed by Henry IV. to the constablership of Wallingford Castle and the stewardship of the honour of Wallingford, St. Valery (including Ewelme and Bensington), and of the Chiltern Hundreds. He married Matilda, daughter and heiress of Sir John Burghurst or Burghersh, and through her succeeded to the estate and lordship of the manor of Ewelme. He accompanied Henry V. upon his expedition to France, taking with him twelve men-of-arms and thirty-seven archers. They took part in the Battle of Agincourt, and brought from that famous field the dead body of Michael, third Earl of Suffolk, to be buried in the church at Ewelme. Thomas Chaucer died at Ewelme in 1434, and was buried there with his wife. His daughter and heiress, Alice, was first betrothed to Sir John Philip, who died before the marriage was consummated, and she was afterwards married to Thomas Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, that brilliant soldier and chivalrous knight who was killed whilst in command of the army that laid siege to Orleans in 1428. Alice, left a childless widow at



THE SUMPTUOUS TOMB OF ALICE, DUCHESS OF SUFFOLK, IN EWELME CHURCH

She was married successively to the commanders of the English army which laid siege to Orleans, the siege terminated by Jeanne d'Arc.

twenty-four years of age, married a few years later Salisbury's successor in the command of the besieging army, William de la Pole, who was created successively Earl, Marquis and Duke of Suffolk.



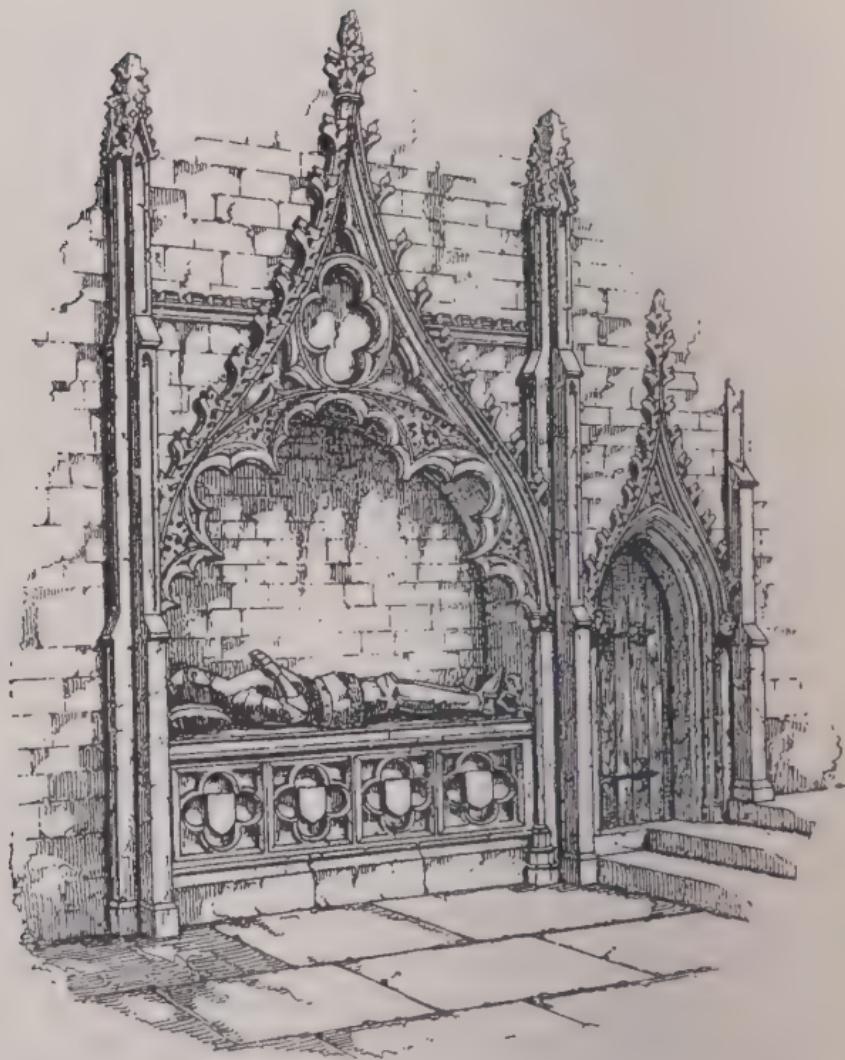
SEAL AND AUTOGRAPH OF WILLIAM DE LA POLE, DUKE OF SUFFOLK

From deeds preserved in the alms-house of Ewelme
adjoining the church.

The interest of Ewelme is so closely bound up with the family of the ill-fated Dukes of Suffolk that a brief account of them is necessary for a visitor to

appreciate the atmosphere and buildings of this charming spot. The de la Poles first appear as merchants of Hull. They seem to have risen to importance as financiers who found the means necessary for carrying on the French wars. William, who died in 1366, was a Baron of the Exchequer. His son, Michael, fought under the Black Prince, became Chancellor under Richard II., and was created Earl of Suffolk. By a turn of the wheel of Fortune, characteristic of the family's fate, he was afterwards impeached and died in exile. His son, who was restored to the earldom, and his grandson, both fought in the French wars and died in France. Both were named Michael; the first died at the siege of Harfleur, the second at Agincourt. On succeeding to the command, William, Earl of Suffolk, was first obliged to abandon the siege of Orleans, and then was defeated and taken prisoner by Jeanne d'Arc in 1429. He was ransomed for £20,000, and shortly afterwards the Duke of Orleans, who had been taken prisoner at Agincourt, and whose ransom had not been paid, was consigned to his custody at Ewelme.

After his defeat in France, Suffolk committed himself to the unpopular policy of making peace and bringing the Hundred Years' War to an end. His influence with the young king, Henry VI., he made secure by arranging his marriage with Margaret of Anjou, and increased his own unpopularity by the condition upon which it was arranged—the surrender of Anjou and Maine. His wife, Alice, became the queen's attendant, whilst he himself was the king's chief adviser. His chief opponent, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who



THE CANOPIED AND RECESSED MONUMENT TO WILLIAM, DUKE
OF SUFFOLK, IN WINGFIELD CHURCH

He was tried as a traitor on board a ship off Dover, was condemned to death and savagely beheaded.

led the party which was eager to continue the war, was arrested, and died a few days later in circumstances which gave rise to the suspicion that he was murdered by the order of his enemy. Suffolk was then created duke. He was now all-powerful, but his unpopularity was as great as his power. The disastrous end of the war led to his fall. His efforts to negotiate a peace were regarded as a betrayal of his country. The nation, humiliated by the loss of Normandy, looked for a scapegoat. Suffolk was accused of having sold the realm to the French and of having treasonably fortified Wallingford Castle. He was committed to the Tower, and presently banished for five years. At the end of April he set sail from Ipswich, but was intercepted off Dover by a ship with shouts of "Welcome, traitor!" A rough trial was held on board, and the duke was savagely beheaded. His body was thrown upon the beach, but by order of Henry it was removed to his home at Wingfield and there buried.

This happened in the year 1450. His widow, the Duchess Alice, survived him for over a quarter of a century. After his death she was confirmed in his possessions, and continued in the office of steward of the honour of Wallingford. She enjoyed the favour of Margaret of Anjou which the duke had earned, and the queen retained her in her household, although Parliament petitioned the king to dismiss her. During Jack Cade's rebellion she was indicted for treason at the Guildhall. Ere long, however, with a shrewd eye to the trend of future events, the duchess deserted the Lancastrian cause. She made her peace with the House of York, and succeeded in arranging a brilliant

match for her only son, John, who, about 1460, was married to Elizabeth Plantagenet, second daughter of the Duke of York. Her old patroness, the dethroned Lancastrian queen, was placed in her custody at Wallingford. Yet, in the end, it was that very marriage with Elizabeth of York which led to the downfall of the Poles.

For the remaining years of her life, however, the policy of Duchess Alice was brilliantly justified by events. The first period of the Wars of the Roses saw the star of the House of York in the ascendant. The old duchess, living in elegant retirement at Ewelme, administering her estate and superintending the affairs of her alms-house, could watch with satisfaction the progress of affairs and the prospects of her grandchildren. Duke John was brother-in-law of Edward IV. His eldest son, John, was created Earl of Lincoln by his uncle, and named as heir to the throne by Richard III. The Duchess Alice died soon after the Battle of Tewkesbury had crushed for a while the last hopes of the Lancastrian party. But the Lancastrian cause revived, and the Earl of Lincoln's hopes of succeeding to the crown were dashed by the issue of Bosworth's Field. Lincoln had fought for Richard in that fateful battle, but was pardoned by the new king, Henry VII. He was soon plotting against his benefactor. With Lord Lovel, he joined the standard of revolt raised by Lambert Simnel, only to suffer defeat and death at Stoke (1487). He was declared traitor, and his estates confiscated. His brother Edmund, Duke John's second son, was allowed to retain part of the estates and to keep the title of earl. But he, too, must

make a bid for the crown. He retired to the Continent, assumed the title of duke, and there pursued his intrigues, until he was surrendered to Henry VII. by Philip of Castile, on condition that his life was spared. So long as Henry lived the condition was observed, and he was kept prisoner in the Tower. But when Henry VIII. came to the throne, acting, it is said, upon a hint from his father, he caused Edmund de la Pole to be beheaded without further trial. Richard, the remaining son of Duke John, had fled to the Continent with his brother Edmund. There he lived as a soldier of fortune in the service of the King of France. Upon his brother's death, he asserted his inheritance to the claims of the House of Suffolk. He, too, assumed the title of duke, and in France was dubbed La Blanche Rose, since he was the last representative of the House of York. He made an attempt at invading England, but it came to nought. At length, in 1525, he fell fighting for Francis I. at the Battle of Pavia.

With him the male line of the House of de la Pole came to an end.

The Duchess Alice died in 1475. A Latin inscription on her magnificent alabaster tomb in the church we are now to visit invites us to "pray for the soul of the most serene Princess Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, patroness of this Church and founder of this Hospital," etc.

Of her husband, the Duke of Suffolk, we are told that, having married Alice Chaucer and acquired her estates, he began to build a "Manor Place of brick and tymbre and set within a fayre mote." Moreover, for

love of his wife "and the commoditie of her lands he fell much to dwell in Oxfordshire." In 1437 licence was granted to him and his wife to establish and endow an alms-house. The foundation, completed five years later, consisted of two priests and thirteen poor men. The priests were endowed with ten pounds a year apiece, the poor men with fourteen pence a week. The building of the alms-houses was completed by the duchess after the duke's murder.

Of the Old Palace, or Manor House, built or enlarged by the Duke of Suffolk, only a fragment survives. After the execution of Edmund, the manor became forfeit to the crown. Edward VI. granted it to his half-sister, the future Queen Elizabeth, who resided there for a while. Tradition points to a tree within the manor grounds on which the young princess is said to have taken a delight in swinging. After she had ascended the throne, her favourite, the Earl of Essex, dwelt at Ewelme Park.

But if the manor house has disappeared, the church, the school, and the alms-house remain almost as their founders left them, and constitute a group of English domestic and ecclesiastical architecture of unsurpassable charm. Along a winding road lies a straggling village. By the side of the road, and skirting the trim lawns of houses placed at irregular angles and distances, runs a clear stream, which is dammed here and there to form beds for water-cress.

On a little eminence on the left, at the end of this road, rises an entrancing group of xvth-century brick buildings, crowned by the church. Ascending the knoll by the short, steep ascent to the alms-house and church,

we pass on our right the massive buttress-chimneys and old oak door (Perpendicular) of the Free School which, founded by the Duke and Duchess of Suffolk (c. 1440), is still in use as a public elementary school. Passing a brick archway and passage, we now reach the alms-house dwellings, which are ranged round a quadrangular cloister of singular charm. The walls are constructed of timber and red brick in herring-bone pattern. The cloister is roofed with old timber, and the barge-boards of the gables in the centre of each of the four sides of the quadrangle are richly carved. In the muniment room is preserved the elaborate rule of the alms-house drawn up by the founders, written on vellum, and signed "Suffolk" (p. 160). It is ordained that the "House be called and cleped perpetually God's House, or else the House of Almesse." Prayers and services are to be held daily in the Chapel of St. John within the church. The xvith-century seal of the hospital shows, in carved niches and beneath elaborate canopies, St. John the Baptist holding the Agnus Dei, and (?) a female saint, with nimbus, holding a sword. The shield of arms below is: Per pale, dex., a fesse between three leopards' heads, William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk; sin., a lion rampant *queue fourchée*, Alice Chaucer, his wife. Ewelme was a favourite royal manor, and for that reason, perhaps, the hospital escaped suppression at the Dissolution. James I., however, diverted the post of master in order to increase the salary of the Regius Professor of Medicine. At the beginning of the xixth century it was bought by the Earl of Macclesfield, in whose family the patronage and nomination of the inmates rests.

That the church survives comparatively intact is due to the broad-mindedness of Col. Francis Martyn, who is buried in the chancel. Being an officer of the Parliamentary forces, but apparently, as a wealthy resident of Ewelme, appreciating the beauty of the church, he used his position to secure the building against the iconoclasm of the more extreme Puritans. His monument is on the north wall of the chancel.

The church was built about 1433 upon the site of an older one by William, Duke of Suffolk, and Alice, his wife. It must have been completed, or nearly completed, by 1434; for in November of that year Thomas Chaucer, father of the duchess, was buried in St. John's Chapel. Both he and the duchess are named on their tombs as patrons of the church.

From the alms-house a covered flight of worn steps leads up, beneath an old oak archway, to the western entrance of the church. On either side of this charming covered approach there are exquisite peeps of the sloping churchyard, over which ancient elms and yew-trees cast their protecting shadows. The oaken beams, tiled roof and herring-bone brickwork of the porch, and a parapet of brick battlements, echo the scheme of the alms-house.

The style of the church is Perpendicular throughout. The plan of it is a copy, on a slightly smaller scale, of the church at Wingfield in Suffolk, which was the home of the de la Poles. The chess-board pattern of dark flints and squared stones on the eastern wall is a characteristic of Suffolk churches. So, too, is the lofty and elaborately carved cover to the fine octagonal stone font, which forms so striking

a feature within the church. This graceful wooden canopy resembles, on a smaller scale, that at Ufford in Suffolk, which was also the property of the de la Poles. The Tudor rose, with the figure of St. Michael surmounting it, in which the canopy terminates, would seem to indicate that it belongs to the end of the xvth century, and is therefore of later date than the church and font itself.

On the corbel of a pillar close to it, a crowned head is carved in stone. It is thought to be a portrait of Edward III., an ancestor of Elizabeth Plantagenet, wife of John, second Duke of Suffolk. It may have been intended by Duke John to indicate that claim of their children to the throne which was destined to prove so fatal to the house of de la Pole.

The church consists of a nave and two aisles. A rood-screen extends across its whole width. There was a rood-loft which has disappeared. There is no chancel arch. The south aisle expands at the eastern end into the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, which is the chapel of the hospital. Here the beautiful roof of Spanish chestnut is decorated with angels and the sacred monogram I.H.S. This device is repeated on the walls. Round them, texts in English are inscribed, the painting of which has been revived.

The heraldic design of the Burghersh family, the fork-tailed lion, and that of the Roets, the wheel, are repeated on some of the tiles on the floor of this chapel. In the east window are collected some fragments of old glass, including in the head the armorial bearings of Michael, third Earl of Suffolk; John, second Duke, and Thomas Chaucer. Coloured stone figures

of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Catherine are on either side of the entrance to the chancel.

The most interesting features of the chapel, however, are the magnificent tombs of Thomas Chaucer and his wife, and of his daughter, the Duchess of Suffolk (pp. 157, 159).

The Chaucer tomb is of Purbeck marble, polished and unpolished. Superb brass effigies inlaid on the upper slab represent Thomas in full plate armour, with sword and dagger, and Matilda his wife, in a robe over a long-sleeved gown, and on her head a veil and wimple. At their feet are a unicorn and fork-tailed lion, the badges of their respective families, Chaucer and Burghersh. Four shields bear the arms of Roet and Burghersh. A Latin inscription records the dates of their deaths, 1434 and 1436. Thomas, "lord of the manor and patron of this church," is described as *armiger* (esquire), which shows that he was a plain gentleman and not a knight, as he is often written in modern books. Other enamelled shields at the ends and on the south side of the tomb bear the arms of families to which their descendants were allied. They are obviously of later date than the tomb itself, and were probably added by Duke John. The repetition of the Royal Arms of France and England seems to be a reminder of the claim of his children to the throne of England.

The magnificent alabaster tomb of Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, is placed in the opening to the chancel. Masterly in execution and elaborate in design, this remarkable monument, fortunately well preserved, challenges comparison with any similar work in

Tomb of the Duchess of Suffolk 171

England. It is described in detail in Napier's *Historical Notices of Swyncombe and Ewelme*. We need therefore only call attention here to one or two points. The recumbent duchess wears the Garter upon her left fore-arm, a thing almost unique in the case of female effigies. There is a rosary at her left side, and a lion at her feet. Her head rests upon a cushion held by two four-winged, feathered angels, and above them is an exquisitely-carved canopy. Two small angels bear the Roet and the Burghersh arms upon shields at the corners at the head of the slab whereon the duchess reclines. Along the outer edge of this slab runs the Latin inscription on brass quoted above (p. 165).

The tomb below is in two sections. The upper half is divided into eight panels containing male and female winged figures bearing shields with arms; the lower half is also divided into eight panels, through the open tracery of which can be seen the figure of the duchess, shrunken in death, and wrapped in a shroud. The whole tomb is covered by a richly-carved Tudor canopy.

It was probably Duke John who raised this noble monument to the memory of his mother. The multiplication of arms and the title assigned to her, "Most Serene Princess," appear to reiterate his assertion of the fatal claim of her grandchildren to the throne of England.

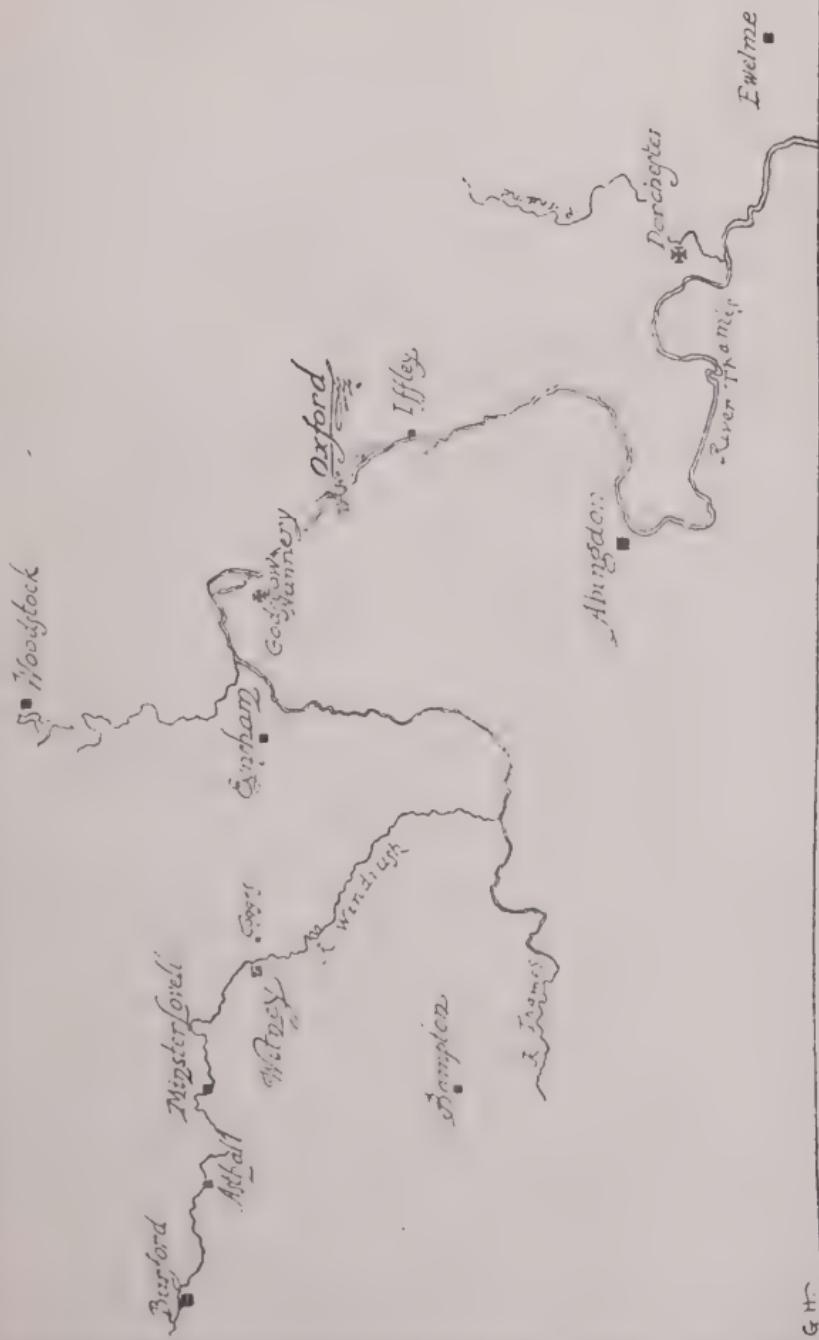
In the north aisle is the burial-place of Michael, Earl of Suffolk, who, as we have seen, was killed at Agincourt (1415). A plain slab of blue stone marks his resting-place, which must originally have been in the older edifice before it was rebuilt by the duke and duchess after their marriage in 1431.

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There is a large number of good brasses in the church, chiefly memorials to the rectors of the parish and masters of the alms-house.

Among the many other monuments, which include some very curious epitaphs, are three to members of the family of the Earl of Berkshire, one of which is inscribed with verses by Waller.

The Berkshire family resided at Ewelme Park during the xvith century.



SKETCH MAP OF THE OXFORD DISTRICT SHOWING THE PLACES MENTIONED IN THIS BOOK

A CHRONOLOGY
OF THE PRIORS AND BISHOPS
AND THE
BUILDING DATES OF
ST. FRIDESWIDE'S PRIORY
AND
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL,
OXFORD

A CHRONOLOGY
OF
ST. FRIDESWIDE'S PRIORY
AND
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL,
OXFORD

DATE	PRIORS AND BUILDING DATES	CONTEMPORARY KINGS AND EVENTS
c. 720	St. Frideswide settled at "Oxnaforda"	
ROMANESQUE		
c. 800	A very modest structure or <i>Ecclesiola</i> perhaps existed on the site of Oxford Cathedral	
ECGBERHT		
829		
839		ÆTHELWULF Vikings ravage England
858		ÆTHELBALD
860		ÆTHELBERHT
866		ÆTHELRED I.
871		ALFRED
890	Mint at Oxford	
900		EADWEARD I.
912		Importance of Oxford
924		ÆTHELSTAN
940		EADMUND I.
946		EADRED
955		EADWIG
959		EADGAR
975		EADWEARD II.
978		ÆTHELRED II. Massacre of Danes at Oxford

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DATE	PRIORS AND BUILDING DATES	CONTEMPORARY KINGS AND EVENTS
1002	Early Church or <i>Ecclesiola</i> destroyed	
1004	New church begun	
1013		SWEYN FORKBEARD
1014		ÆTHELRED II. (restored)
1016		EADMUND II. ("Ironside")
		CNUT OF DENMARK Council at Oxford
1035		HAROLD I.
1040		HARTHACNUT
1042		EADWEARD III., "The Con- fessor"
1066		HAROLD II.
		WILLIAM I.
1087		WILLIAM II.
1100		HENRY I.

ROMANESQUE—LATE NORMAN SCHOOL

1111	<i>Guimond</i>	
1135		STEPHEN
1150	<i>Robert de Cricklade ("Canutus")</i>	
	Commencement of Second Church	
1154		HENRY II.

TRANSITIONAL—NORMAN GOTHIc

1180	<i>Philip</i>	
	Completion of Second Church	
1189		RICHARD I.
1190	Church damaged by fire	
1191	<i>John</i>	

EARLY ENGLISH GOTHIC

1199		JOHN
1204	<i>William</i>	

A Chronology of Christ Church, Oxford 179

DATE	PRIORS AND BUILDING DATES	CONTEMPORARY KINGS AND EVENTS
1216		HENRY III.
1220	Commencement of Lady Chapel	
1225	<i>Simon</i>	
1228	<i>Helyas or Elias</i>	
	Second stage of Tower	
1235	<i>G. Scotus</i>	
	Lady Chapel and Chapter-House begun	
	<i>William de Gloucester</i>	
	<i>Walter de Crokeley</i>	
	<i>Gilbert</i>	
1248	<i>Robert de Weston</i>	
	? Spire commenced	
1259	<i>Robert (or John) de Olney</i>	
1272		EDWARD I.
1278	<i>John Lewknor</i>	

DECORATED GOTHIC

1284	<i>Robert Ewelme</i>	
	Decorated additions and insertions commenced	
1294	<i>Alexander de Sutton</i>	
1307		EDWARD II.
1316	<i>Robert de Dorvestone</i>	
1320	St. Lucy Chapel	
1327		EDWARD III.
1338	<i>John de Lyttlemore</i>	
1345	<i>Latin Chapel</i>	
1349	<i>Nicholas de Hungerford</i>	THE BLACK DEATH

PERPENDICULAR PERIOD

1362	<i>John de Wallingford</i>	
1373	<i>John Dudeford</i>	
1377		RICHARD II.
1391	<i>Thomas Bradenell</i>	
1399		HENRY IV.
1401	<i>Richard de Oxenford</i>	

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DATE	PRIORS AND BUILDING DATES	CONTEMPORARY KINGS AND EVENTS
1413		HENRY V.
1422		HENRY VI.
1434	<i>Edmund Andover</i>	
1440	<i>Robert Downham</i>	
1450	? Commencement of Cloister	
1461		EDWARD IV.
1470	? Clerestory of Choir remodelled Perpendicular vaulting com- menced	
147-	<i>George Norton</i>	
1480	<i>Richard Walker</i>	
1483		EDWARD V.
1485	The Watching-Chamber	RICHARD III.
1496	<i>Thomas Ware</i>	HENRY VII.
1501	<i>William Chedill</i>	
1503	Great Window and Vaulting of North Transept	
1509		EDWARD VIII.
1513	<i>John Burton</i> Wooden Roof of Nave, etc.	
1525	Cardinal Wolsey demolishes part of Nave to find room for "Tom" Quadrangle	
1535-9		Dissolution of Monasteries
	BISHOPS OF OXFORD	
1546	<i>Robert King</i>	
1547		EDWARD VI.
1553		MARY I.
1557	No bishops till 1567	
1558		ELIZABETH
1567	<i>Hugh Coren</i>	
1568	No bishops till 1589	
1589	<i>John Underhill</i>	
1592	No bishops till 1603	
1603	<i>John Bridges</i>	JAMES I.
1618	<i>John Howson</i>	
1625		CHARLES I.
1628	<i>Richard Corbett</i>	
1632	<i>John Bancroft</i>	

A Chronology of Christ Church, Oxford 181

DATE	BISHOPS AND BUILDING DATES	CONTEMPORARY KINGS AND EVENTS
1641	<i>Robert Skinner</i>	
1642	Oxford temporary capital of Charles I.	
1646	Oxford taken by Parliamentarians Damage to Cathedral, etc.	
1649		THE COMMONWEALTH
1653		OLIVER CROMWELL
1658		RICHARD CROMWELL
1660		CHARLES II.
1663	<i>William Paul</i>	
1665	<i>Walter Blandford</i>	
1671	<i>Nathaniel Crewe</i>	
1674	<i>Henry Compton</i>	
1675	<i>John Fell</i>	
1685		JAMES II.
1686	<i>Samuel Parker</i>	
1688	<i>Timothy Hall</i>	
1689		WILLIAM III.
1690	<i>John Hough</i>	
1695		MARY II.
1699	<i>William Talbot</i>	
1702		WILLIAM III. (alone)
1714		ANNE
1715	<i>John Potter</i>	
1727		GEORGE I.
1737	<i>Thomas Secker</i>	
1758	<i>John Hume</i>	
1760		GEORGE II.
1766	<i>Robert Lowth</i>	
1777	<i>John Butler</i>	
1788	<i>Edward Smallwell</i>	
1799	<i>John Randolph</i>	
1807	<i>Charles Moss</i>	
1811	<i>William Jackson</i>	
1816	<i>Henry Legge</i>	
1820		GEORGE III.
1827	<i>Charles Lloyd</i>	
1829	<i>Richard Bagot</i>	
		GEORGE IV.

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DATE	BISHOPS AND BUILDING DATES	CONTEMPORARY KINGS AND EVENTS
1830		WILLIAM IV.
1837		VICTORIA
1845	<i>Samuel Wilberforce</i>	
1856	First restoration	
1870	<i>J. F. Mackarness</i>	
1888	Second restoration (Scott)	
1901	<i>William Stubbs</i>	EDWARD VII.
1910	<i>Francis Paget</i>	GEORGE V.
1911	<i>Charles Gore</i>	
1914-18		Great World War
1919	<i>Hubert Murray Burge</i> (d. June, 1925)	

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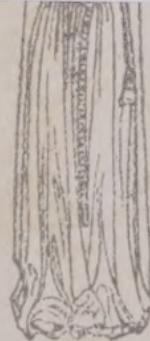
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